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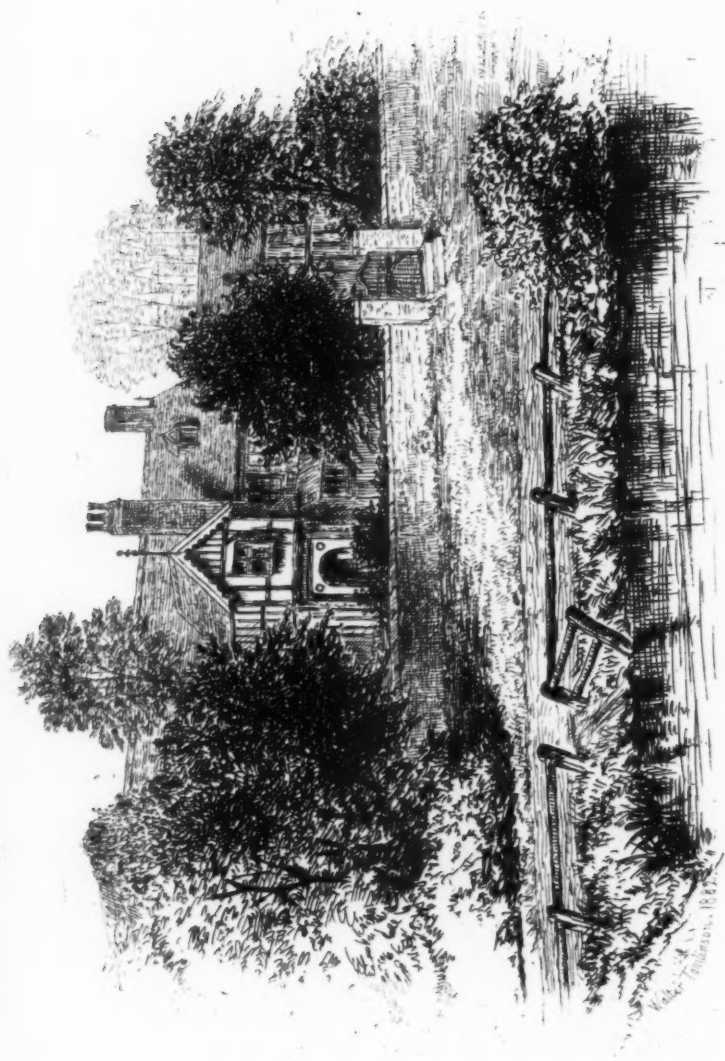
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MOSS-GATHERERS: A LANCASHIRE SPECIMEN.

BY ABRAHAM STANSFIELD.

BUSY with her giant industries, her wide commerce, and vast enterprises in so many fields, Lancashire is apt to forget that she is famous for something *besides*, viz., her Artizan Botanists. And the reason why these men, partially educated, and indifferently equipped in many ways, have given to Lancashire a reputation even beyond the limits of the three kingdoms is that, in the economy of scientific labour, the function of seeking and finding new species is a no less essential one than the function of dissecting, of classifying, or of describing them.

Of these working-men botanists—and they were long since numbered by hundreds—perhaps the most distinguished (up to the time of his lamented death, at least) was JOHN NOWELL, who, besides, was a man of so sweet and gentle a disposition that none could look upon without loving him. Nowell was born at Todmorden, which place, as there are thousands of people scattered about the world who have never seen, and probably never will see it, but who have heard a great deal about some of its people, I will here attempt to describe. Todmorden, then, is neither a Lan-

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cashire nor a Yorkshire town; and yet it is *both*, being situated partly in the one county and partly in the other, and watered by the river Calder. It lies, as the historian of Whalley would say, in the very gorge of the English Apennines. It is, in fact, situated on the flank of that great Pennine chain of hills so interesting to the British geologist. It is a place at once picturesque and unsightly, a combination of romance and vulgarity, a poem with prose interlineations. The town is of the dullest, the prosiest of the prosy—a cottony town, the neighbourhood pure poetry! In the town itself, if the time be summer, amid clash and clatter of looms, whirr of wheels, and whizz of spindles, you are stunned and deafened; amid its warps and wefts, and china clays, you are stifled, blinded: walk but a few paces, and you find yourself on the first steps of a ladder of green hills conducting, as it should seem, to the clouds. Mounting this ladder, you pass, in places, thigh deep through fragrant ferns, under waving green-woods, and by plashing waterfalls. Reaching, at length, the lofty and it may be still verdant summit, your cheeks are fanned by the freshest breezes, while above you the weird clouds career in their own wild fashion; and you look *down* on what has often been described as "one of the most picturesque valleys in the north of England," and *up* to moors (purple, in their season, with the blooming heather) stretching further, and still further, till lost in the misty horizon. It is a place where the lungs can dilate, the mind expand, the spirit soar! But besides its attractions to seekers of health, and to lovers of the beautiful and the picturesque, and its interest to the geologist, Todmorden, with its innumerable cloughs and mountain-gorges, and thousand dripping, cool recesses, offers the richest booty to the plant-hunter, and to the gatherer of ferns and mosses above all. Moreover, situated as it is on the borders of the two great counties before mentioned, it is a place of peculiar

and special interest to the student of dialects ; and were our Waughs and Brierleys a nomadic people, and well-advised, they would at once strike their present tents, and make a journey due north, to find "fresh fields and pastures new" in the Todmorden neighbourhood. These vast ranges of hills, too, constituting the Lancashire and Yorkshire border-country, are a rich mine of mother-wit, in the main caustic to a degree, and pitiless, smacking of the hills themselves, and of the rude storms that in winter howl around them. Even in the names given to places, there is a dry humour discoverable that is highly noteworthy, such as "Back-o'-behind," for an out-of-the-way district, and "No-dale" for a very hilly quarter! Sheltering in the far recesses of this mountainous region, remote from centres of population and of culture, and gradually reclaiming a stubborn soil from the limits of the marshy valleys upwards to the highest points available for cultivation, these tenacious and sturdy Saxon settlers of the past, with slight Celtic and Scandinavian admixture, have, until now, pretty well held their own, and remained what they were in manners, and in language, even to the accent. So much is this the case that hearing the *patois* on some of these hill-sides, you would think, for the nonce, you were listening to a German-born. And unhappy the man who shall lay himself open to the incisive mother-wit of the wide-awake men of "the tops," as almost every one, in these parts, *more suo*, calls the hills. At the commencement of this century, and in a modified degree now, a sturdy independence, and a distinct individuality, "each hero following his peculiar bent," were the marked characteristics of these hill-people, each of whom, by the way, failed not to rejoice in some strange nickname ; and no one took greater delight in recalling and describing their odd ways and uncouth manners than the subject of this sketch, in whose memory there hung a whole portrait-gallery of "local

characters " worthy of the pen of Scott. The Scandinavian admixture would seem to have added daring, the Celtic acuteness of mind, and a keener wit, towards the composition of a character in the main Saxon. How, as regards language, the three elements, Celtic, Saxon, and Scandinavian, have contended for a while, and gradually blended, is shown not only in the *patois*, but, in the names of places throughout the neighbourhood—a study in itself full of interest, but one which I shall leave untouched for the present.

Here, then, at Todmorden, on one of these wild hills, and amid the surroundings just described, to which he offered, in some respects, so strong a contrast, John Nowell was born, beginning life almost with the century; here he lived for something short of the allotted span, viz., sixty-five years; and here he died, more widely lamented than any other inhabitant of his native valley, which, with its neighbouring valleys, has produced, or has been the abode of, not a few who have become famous in the world of literature—witness Dr. Whitaker, the learned historian; Dr. Fawcett, who wrote upon "Anger;" John Foster, the distinguished essayist; and others.

Born on a bare hill-side, and in abject poverty, Nowell became early inured to toil, and his schooling was of the scantiest, never reaching beyond the three R's. While yet a mere boy, he was put to hand-loom weaving, whereby, at that time, a full-grown man, working while the sun shone in summer, might earn perhaps eightpence or tenpence a day. A little later, when the mule and the power-loom came into use, Nowell (who, as is the custom, had married young) was employed by Messrs. Fielden Brothers, of Todmorden, at their extensive works, as a twister-in; and with them, labouring in this very humble capacity, he remained thenceforth and to within a few days of his death. For twenty laborious

years, in all weathers, he daily made a journey of several miles from his little hill-side cottage on the rocky heights of Stansfield to Messrs. Fielden's works at Waterside, his family all the while steadily increasing, and making the problem "how to live" more difficult.

An intimate friend of Nowell's was the late president of the Todmorden Botanical Society, whose character offered to his own many points of resemblance, and some of contrast; but both were ardent lovers of Nature, and had the same strong bent towards the study of Botany. Nowell and his friend had been together from the first—from the period of earliest boyhood:

They twa had paidl't i' the burn,
And pu'd the gowans fine.

And they afterwards rambled and botanized together over no inconsiderable portion of England, Wales, and Ireland, but chiefly over this and the sister county of York, the one paying special attention to the mosses, the other to the ferns, and both adding largely to our knowledge of the native species, and their variations under differing conditions of growth and situation. While still youths the two had, by combined effort—that is, by putting together their "sair-won penny fees"—contrived to purchase a copy of *Culpepper's Herbal*, and subsequently an *Introduction to Botany*, by one Priscilla Wakefield, at which rather slender fountain not a few of our self-made botanists, thirsting for botanical lore, appear to have drunk betimes. These two books formed the earliest botanical library of our two ardent youths; and by their aid, and always rambling together, they gradually acquainted themselves with the wild plants of the neighbourhood, extending their explorations as the years went on.

Nowell's fame as a cryptogamic botanist rapidly spread; and in the course of a few years he came to have direct

intercourse with quite a number of working-men and other botanists as devoted to the study of the lower cryptogams as himself; while, at the same time, he engaged in a correspondence with distant botanists which continued every year to increase, his correspondents being men in every station and condition of life, from the peer to the peasant, though the major part, doubtless, were people seeking botanical favours. And at no time did the good man appear so truly happy as when labouring for others:

Sic vos, non vobis, mellificatis apes.

Nowell's knowledge of British mosses, the department he made more especially his study, was as accurate as it was extensive. Unlike many self-made botanists, too, he was always most careful about the correct orthography of the Latin name of any plant unfamiliar to him; and although this will be regarded by many as a trifling circumstance, I hold that it is important, as showing the fine moral fibre of the man, and his delicate conscientiousness and scrupulosity. The self-educated man who is conscientious about his spelling is generally found to be conscientious in other and higher matters. With regard to the above trait in Nowell's character, I have heard one familiar with him from his cradle aver that he was never once known to tell a falsehood, or to be out of temper. In a time of sophistication, it is pleasant to think of a man like this, who to the character of *savant* and student of nature added excellencies so rare. Quietly and steadily working, through fifty years of sunshine and cloud, ever, ever working at the mosses, &c., if fame reached Nowell at all it came wholly unsought, not to say uncourted.

He lived not with ambitious aim;
But hath not died without his fame.

Enough for this gentle, quiet man the pleasure of seeking and finding those tiny bits of vegetation to whose investiga-

tion he devoted a long, laborious, and beautiful life. Here, in the pleasure of seeking, was reward enough for him; let others bruit and noise abroad his discoveries as they might.

Among these was the important addition, in 1840, to the Yorkshire flora of the rare and beautiful shining cavern moss (*Schistostega pennata*),* one of the most interesting mosses native to this country. In the same year, Nowell rendered valuable assistance to the late Mr. Henry Baines, of York (a botanist of the old school, and well known to the writer), in the compilation of his then much-looked-for *Flora of Yorkshire*, in the introduction to which work Baines acknowledges the great services rendered him by Nowell, whom he describes as "a most accurate and indefatigable cryptogamic botanist." And when, in 1854 (in conjunction with Mr. J. G. Baker, of Thirsk, now of the Royal Gardens, Kew), Baines republished his *Yorkshire Flora*, Nowell edited one portion of the work—"The Mosses of the County."

With the late Richard Buxton, of Manchester, himself one of the most remarkable of Lancashire working-men botanists, and a man of the mildest and most retiring manners, Nowell was long intimate; the two were in every respect kindred spirits; and in the preface to the first edition of his *Botanical Guide to the Flowering Plants, &c., of Manchester* (1849), Buxton speaks of Nowell as being, so far as he knew, "the first among working men as a muscologist." Indeed, this opinion was held on all hands, and not seldom given expression to, even in high quarters; and if praise, *et præterea nihil*, could make the mare to go, Nowell would not have had to travel very long upon his feet. And if praise (sometimes indiscriminating enough) could have taken him off his feet, in another sense, that also would have been done. But by this man, noble by nature, and not to be spoilt:—

* *Schistostega osmundacea* of authors.

Honour, that with such an alluring sound
Proud mortals charms, and does appear so fair,
An echo, dream, shade of a dream, was found
Disperst abroad by every breath of air.

The marvel of all was that, working as he did in these very minute investigations with only a small, common magnifying-glass, he should contrive to be so accurate; for it was long, indeed, before he could indulge in the expensive luxury of a microscope. No doubt, if the praise of which he was on every side the subject had taken the form of a bill to be cashed at a date fixed, he might soon have equipped himself to the fullest extent. But, *Dis aliter visum!*

His fame for accuracy, in the investigation of British mosses, &c., spread, nevertheless, and very soon reached Sir William Hooker, at Kew, than whom none more eminent in Botany ever directed those royal gardens of world-wide fame. To say that Nowell's claims to notice came before Sir W. Hooker is to say that a position was offered the rising botanist at botanical head-quarters; this, in fact, was the case. But the shy, retiring man chose to remain in poverty, in his own little Lancashire nook, where, as toil remitted, he could botanize in freedom his native hills. And perhaps the good man was wise, since by this choice he escaped the thousand petty envyings and jealousies by which real talent is almost always pursued, however innocent and unassuming, and apparently calculated to disarm such jealousies, the subject may be. Among Nowell's more distinguished foreign correspondents may be mentioned the late Professor Schimper, of Strasburg (author, in conjunction with Bruch and Gumbel, of that magnificent work the *Bryologia Europæa*). And when, some twenty years ago, this famous moss-gatherer paid a visit to these islands, Nowell had the honour of showing the great professor over several of his old hunting-grounds in the north country. Schimper subsequently passed into Scotland.

Nowell himself, ardent botanist as he was, and familiar as he was with the British *flora*, never once set foot "ayont the Tweed;" although (as a devout Mohammedan yearns after Mecca) he was always cherishing the hope of sometime visiting the Perthshire highlands, botanically so renowned. But ere that hope could be realized he was called away, to botanize—we know not where; but surely *somewhere*! He died, after several weeks' severe suffering, of heart-disease, in the autumn of 1867, at Todmorden, and was buried in the shadow of a little church (Cross-stone) which is perched on those rocky Stansfield heights so familiar to his feet, overlooking the Todmorden valley, and which serves as a landmark for miles around. Nor did any better human mould ever mingle with its parent mould in that little hill-side church-yard. And in the "old" church-yard, in the valley of Todmorden, stands a monument to him (a handsome granite obelisk) erected shortly after his death by a wide circle of his admirers. And thousands of busy feet pass daily by that church-yard wall where his for forty years had passed before, in the dreary and seldom remitting toil of a cotton operative's life.

Nowell's passion for moss-hunting was strong to the end. I spent with him his last night on earth, and all through that night, to the last moment, and to the last breath, his talk, in his delirium, was of mosses:

So with the throttling hands of death at strife,
Ground he at mosses.
Still through the rattle would he mosses name—
While he could stammer,
Hypnums, Bry——, Mniums, Sphagnums, Phascums came!

Nowell's knowledge in his own peculiar branch of botanical science was undoubtedly vast; and if, in combination with it, he had possessed the ready faculty which some have of applying and spreading their knowledge, the mark he would

have left would, I believe, have been both broad and deep. As it is, he has not died without a name—an honourable name—in the botanical literature of this country. As already stated, he is the author, in conjunction with the late Henry Baines, of York, and the distinguished J. G. Baker, of Kew, of a *Flora of Yorkshire*, published in 1854. To many other Floras, and to many botanical journals, he contributed much valuable matter, thus earning the gratitude not of one or two only, but of the world at large; for I take it that whoever contributes to the world's stock of permanent knowledge is, in so far, its general benefactor. Finally, up to the time of his last illness, he had been engaged, in conjunction with his oldest friend before referred to, upon a *flora* of his native district, the MS. of which remains in my hands.

But Nowell will live in the world of science by another and stronger title, for the celebrated Mitten (author of several works on the mosses and lower cryptogams) has deemed him worthy of the very highest honour, by giving his name to a lovely genus of liverwort (*Nowellia curvifolia*), of which examples were found in North Britain, in 1876, by Dr. Carrington, himself one of the most distinguished of Lancashire moss-gatherers. Professor Schimper, also, before his lamented death, some years ago, named after Nowell a very beautiful species of moss (*Zygodon Nowellii*). Whilst Moore, the eminent pteridologist, has connected the name of "Nowell" with the higher cryptogams, by giving it to a very curious and distinct form of the fragrant mountain fern (*Lastrea montana Nowelliana*), found by our friend in North Wales. So long, therefore, as any one of these plants retains its present characteristics, Nowell's name, in the world of science, is destined to remain as green and fresh as his own loved mosses. And I would say: *Esto perpetua!*

As an illustration of the zest with which Nowell searched

for his tiny favourites, it may be mentioned that in one of his latest excursions, I believe his very latest, to North Wales, whilst botanizing on the banks of a river of some depth, he had the ill-luck to fall souse overhead into the water, whence emerging, drenched to the skin, he immediately stripped himself, spread out his clothes to the sun, and walked on, *in puris naturalibus*! "What to do?" will be asked. To botanize, of course; and walking thus, in the garment of our first parent, Nowell made the only real "find" yielded by that journey. His devotion to the science reminds one of the renowned Mellor, of Royton, the so-called father of Lancashire working-men botanists; and of the still more renowned Don, the Scotch botanist, who added the rare *Ranunculus alpestris* to the British flora. Mellor's enthusiasm for plants, especially mountain plants, knew no bounds, and in searching after his alpine darlings, in the course of his long life of eighty-two years, he must have tramped over the hills and dales of England and Scotland more than any other Lancashire man of his time. Of Don it is related that "such was his enthusiastic love of alpine plants that he spent whole months at a time collecting them among the gloomy solitudes of the Grampians, his only food a little meal, or a bit of crust moistened in the mountain burn."

Of the excellent and estimable Lancashire working-men botanists contemporary with Nowell, in addition to those already mentioned, and who botanize no longer (under *mundane* conditions, though we would fain hope they still gather flowers in fields elysian!) were the two Hobsons, Edward and William, Horsfield the elder, Percival the elder, Crowther, Crozier, Tinker, Martin, Bentley, Shaw, and others; though these were often engaged in the same field of research widely apart, and, for a time, totally unknown to each other. What the late Edward Hobson did for British

botany the large herbarium he left behind him, and which is now accessible to the public of Manchester, sufficiently shows. As regards his cousin William, who, in his latter years, was personally known to the writer, he emigrated rather early to America; but his botanical enthusiasm suffered thereby no diminution, and, in addition to personal intercourse, I had much interesting correspondence with him in regard to several rare species of North American ferns. Besides his extreme fondness for botany, William was an ardent entomologist, and when anything like a butterfly, or even a moth, was on the wing, flew into ecstasies, *more suo*. He died, at a ripe age, at Philadelphia, some dozen years ago.

How delightful it would be to continue to discourse of these old botanists—men of a type that is fast disappearing, that *must* disappear, and that cannot ever, in the altered condition of men and things, reappear. What a pleasant gallery of portraits they would make! What striking similarities and what striking contrasts! Jolly Jethro Tinker in this chair; shy, retiring Buxton in that! But our concern is with one of them only—John Nowell—who, without the demonstrative hilarity and ebulliency of men of the Tinker type, had all their genial, cordial nature, and without the extreme sensitiveness of the gentle Buxton, had all his natural delicacy and modesty.

He was retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain, in a noonday grove.

His very memory brings healing, and faith, and hope. For as it required, according to the old story, ten just men to save from destruction the doomed Cities of the Plain, so it requires sometimes, amid the din and strife of the world, the memory at least of ten just and upright men to save one's sinking faith in humanity, and, with me, Nowell is one of the ten!

"His extensive and accurate knowledge," writes Buxton (in 1849), referring to Nowell, "joined to an excellent disposition, has always made his company a source of pleasure to me." A source of pleasure to anyone was Nowell's "company," as all thus privileged will testify. To me, who enjoyed that privilege for thirty years, he always appeared (I say it without the least exaggeration) as if encircled by a radiant halo of goodness—there seemed perpetually to exhale from the man an atmosphere of love and of peace!

His mere presence was soothing and sedative; one breathed about him the very spirit of tranquillity—a gracious influence, potent to exorcise evil genii! Coming into the mild presence of Nowell, the wrathful man forgot his wrath, and took up the olive-branch of peace; the rancorous man forgot his rancour, and passed out filled with kindness and goodwill to man. Nor was Pope's noble line ever more truly illustrated than in this case:—

An honest man 's the noblest work of God!

And although Nowell has done much, as regards scientific work, in that branch of natural history which he made his speciality—although in his character of student of nature he has shown us what can be done by faithfully following the sublime Goethean maxim, *Ohne Hast, ohne Rast*—I believe he has done still more in offering the example of a life, certainly not short, of the most singular modesty, of the most losing honesty, of the most uncompromising veracity; a life, in fact, of its kind, all but unique.

It is often charged against our self-made botanists that, generally speaking, they are *botanists only*; that, unless it be a plant, they are indifferent to almost everything. This has been charged against Nowell; but I happen to know that he was indifferent to nothing; and that, so far from having read very little out of his peculiar walk of science,

he had read, and not only read but thought, a great deal, though always in his own quiet, inobtrusive way. Careless people very often mistake fuss for force, the absence of fuss for emptiness. In these hurrying days (and *some* hurry is, doubtless, inevitable) it is thought if there is but little in the "shop-window" there is next to nothing in the shop! Nowell was of all men the least fussy, the least showy; he had always a full shop, but had next to nothing in the "window;" so the hasty judged, as they judge always, hastily, and in this case quite erroneously.





SPENSER'S "FAERIE QUEENE:"
ITS PLACE AND INFLUENCE IN LITERATURE.

BY JAMES CROMPTON.

THE number of general readers who devote much attention to the *Faerie Queene* at the present day is probably not very large. There is no difficulty in suggesting a sufficient explanation of this assumed indifference to a great poet. The obvious tendency of an age when books are multiplied beyond all precedent is to lose sight of the productions of former generations. The crowds of modern candidates loudly clamouring for public favour drown the voices which speak to us from the past. The venerable shades of our ancestors are elbowed out of the way by the urgent self-assertion of our contemporaries. In the present case, also, those who read only for amusement will be repelled by frequent archaisms of language, and by a mode of treatment which is not that of our time; and though these features may not materially increase the difficulties of an intelligent reader, they require at least that he should put himself into a correct relation to his author by acquiring a knowledge of his vocabulary, and of the historical and literary surroundings in the midst of which his work was accomplished.

But with students of English literature the case is widely different. Amongst these, for reasons which will become more apparent as we proceed, the writings of Spenser can never sink into neglect. Down to the period of the Restoration the four great representative names in the roll of English poets are Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, and Milton. In the process of intellectual development each of these writers has his own place, and has exercised a powerful and far-reaching influence.

The well-known American author of *Lectures on the English Language*, Mr. G. P. Marsh, has remarked that "Every great popular writer is in a certain sense a product of his country and his age, a reflection of the intellect, the moral sentiment, and the prevailing social opinions of his time." Regarded from this point of view, the *Faerie Queene* possesses a very special and peculiar interest; for Spenser belonged to an age which is marked in the history of the English race by its intellectual pre-eminence. The literary instincts of the nation, which during the fifteenth century had been almost entirely dormant, had gradually acquired new energy during the first half of the sixteenth, and, during the latter half, poets, philosophers, historians, and dramatists appeared with a profusion hitherto unequalled amongst the English people. Then were heard

Those melodious bursts, that fill
The spacious times of great Elizabeth
With sounds that echo still.

Amongst the great writers of this period, Spenser was in point of time the first. Born in 1552, and about a year older than Hooker, he was at work upon his *Shepheardes Calendar* when Ben Jonson was "mewling and puking in the nurse's arms," when Shakspeare was acquiring his "small Latin and less Greek" at the Stratford Grammar School, and when Elizabeth was patting upon the head "her young

Lord Keeper." He does not reflect the greatness of his contemporaries but foreshadows it. They could not have been his models, nor indeed was he theirs. He is in fact much further separated from his immediate successors in literary style and taste than he is in years. When he published the first portion of his *Faerie Queene*, there had been no indication of that great outburst of dramatic genius which was soon to follow, and Spenser's work was modelled after the romantic taste of a previous age. Amongst his distinguished contemporaries those who imbibed most deeply the spirit of chivalry, which is the pervading inspiration of the *Faerie Queene*, were probably the brilliant but unfortunate Sir Walter Raleigh, and Sir Philip Sidney, the "Astrophel" of Spenser's elegy, and whose untimely death he never ceased to lament. But he did not form a school. As he had no model amongst English authors, so also he had no successor, though we discover traces of his influence both in his own and subsequent generations.

His personal relations with the great writers of his time were not very intimate. Was he ever present on those evenings at the Mermaid or the Apollo when quaint old Thomas Fuller enjoyed the wit combats betwixt Shakspeare and Ben Jonson? "which two," he says, "I beheld like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war. Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning; solid, but slow in his performances. Shakspeare with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention." We can realize the scene thus sketched for us with a loving hand, and almost hear the voice of the more learned dramatist as he declares his opinions in a tone not remarkable for modesty. He is probably discussing the last new play, perhaps the *Tempest* or the *Winter's Tale*, and proving, at any rate to the satis-

faction of one of the company, that with all its acknowledged merit it still lacks the master hand of Jonson. But we cannot discern the form of an elfin knight in the parlour of the Mermaid, and do not feel sure that his glittering armour would have been altogether in place among the Bohemian brotherhood.

If it were not for one somewhat uncertain reference in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, we should be without a single allusion from the pen of Shakspeare to the poet of the *Faerie Queene*. In the passage referred to, Theseus, reading from a paper, says :—

The thrice three muses mourning for the death
Of learning, late deceased in beggary.

Surely Spenser's "Tears of the Muses," and the circumstances of his death, must have been in Shakspeare's mind when he wrote these words.

Though produced in solitude, and for the most part without the society of congenial intellects, the *Faerie Queene* contains abundant evidence of a mind keenly alive to the political, intellectual, and ecclesiastical struggles of that period of conflict and transition in which it was produced. The first great struggle of the Reformation had spent itself, but he had imbibed its combative spirit, and was far too near the battlefield to look on with philosophic calmness. He had much to say which stirred both the intellect and the passions of his countrymen. He uttered dark sayings and used similitudes, yet spoke to his generation in words which they would understand.

In selecting the allegorical form for his great work, Spenser displayed a just appreciation of his own genius. Under no other conditions probably could his peculiar powers have worked with equal advantage. Allegory has sometimes been the refuge of men who have had something to say that it would have been dangerous to utter without

some concealment or disguise. We can scarcely think that this motive moved the mind of Spenser. He is far too outspoken for a man who was afraid of being understood. His meaning is throughout an open secret, and would be as well understood by his contemporaries as if it had been proclaimed from the house-top. Yet it was not without danger that he depicted the papal power in Archimago, Philip II. in Orgoglio, and the Queen of Scots in Duessa; for James, then King of Scotland, and afterwards of England also, naturally indignant at the manner in which his mother was treated in the fifth and sixth books of the poem when they first appeared, in 1596, demanded the punishment of the writer. This, under the circumstances, was not likely to be conceded, but had Spenser lived long enough to become a subject of James, it may be doubted whether his immunity would have been secured. It is likely, too, that in other cases where there was no danger to the writer, but where he did not wish to incur resentment, the thin veil of allegory might conveniently cover suggestions and allusions that would be understood by contemporary readers, though their precise application may be lost to us.

What Spenser actually accomplished in this poem falls far short of what he originally intended. His plan embraced, in fact, two poems, as he explains in his letter to Raleigh, in each of which Prince Arthur was to be the central figure. In the first, in which Arthur is portrayed as prince, are set forth the moral virtues of the individual; in the second, in which it was intended that Arthur should appear as king, were to be represented the virtues which relate to public and political life, so as to depict an ideal state. The second of these was never begun and the first was but half finished. There were to be twelve books in the first poem, in which the twelve private moral virtues were to be set forth. The particular virtue being represented

in each case by a separate knight. Thus we have first the Red Cross Knight (Holiness); second, Sir Guyon (Temperance); third, Britomartis (Chastity); fourth, two knights, Cambel and Triamond (Friendship); fifth, Artegall (Justice); sixth, Sir Calidore (Courtesy). Excepting a fragment of a seventh book, the subject of which appears to have been Constancy, this is all we have of Spenser's work.

Prince Arthur intervenes with almost mechanical uniformity in the eighth canto of each book, except the third. In his person is set forth Magnificence, or perhaps Magnanimity would be a better word, which virtue he regards, following Aristotle, as the perfection of all the rest.¹¹ In the richness and fertility of his imagination, the writer multiplies allusions and heaps one allegorical meaning upon another, though always keeping in hand the thread of his main design. It is ever the England of his own time, with its special conflicts and dangers, that he has before him; that is his Fairie land, and by the Faerie Queene he tells us he means Glory in his "general intention;" but in his "particular" he has in view "the most excellent and glorious person of Queen Elizabeth." But under this name he only represents her in the capacity of Queen, when he wishes to introduce her as a "most virtuous and beautiful lady" she is Belphebe, Phœbe, as he explains, being one of the names of Diana.¹² The allegory is complicated, and the special meanings of the poet are not always obvious. The action of the poem proceeds along similar lines throughout all the books, and, notwithstanding the resources and ingenuity of the writer, if the poem had extended to the length originally designed, it is difficult to see how the interest and power could have been sustained. The first three books convey the best impression of the author's genius, and upon them he has most freely lavished the wealth of his imagination. Upon the whole one is inclined to think that the

reputation of Spenser has not suffered much from the incompleteness of the work. His peculiar powers had their full scope and play in the portion which he has written, and we have there the product of his highest thinking and the ripest fruit of his genius.

The stanza which Spenser adopted, and which is in part his own invention, is founded upon the Italian *ottava rima*, or eight-lined stanza. To this Spenser added a ninth line, an Alexandrine. This celebrated stanza, since known as the Spenserian, is employed in the *Faerie Queene* with inexhaustible skill and ingenuity. His mellifluous verse has been the envy of poets and the admiration of readers in all subsequent ages. A curious literary heresy made many converts among the poets and scholars of this age, Spenser for a time being one of them. The old-fashioned dress of English poetry was to be discarded, and laborious pedantry was to distinguish itself by compelling our language to submit to the metrical rules of the Greek and Latin tongues. Henceforth rhyme was to be regarded as below the dignity of poetry, which, having laid aside the doublet and hose, was to assume the toga, and tread the ground like a Roman hero; or, shall we not rather say, was to fume and strut like a tailor's apprentice in the garb of Macbeth.

But Spenser's pure taste and exquisite ear for rhythmical melody soon induced him to abandon an artificial structure of verse entirely unsuited to the language in which he wrote, and to return to the natural and simple flow of his own musical lines. The prejudice against rhyme, however, long survived Spenser's day. Even Milton, though most of his minor poems were written in rhyme, not only discarded it when he came to the composition of his great work, but speaks of it in language of contemptuous depreciation as "the invention of a barbarous age to set off wretched matter and lame metre." Few, however, at the present day would

wish that the *Faerie Queene* had been presented in any other dress than that which Spenser has chosen, and few will deny that he discovered in the language capabilities of poetical and musical expression which had never before been developed.

In his choice of words, idioms, and grammatical forms, Spenser has given an antique cast to the language of the *Faerie Queene*. Sir Philip Sidney speaks of this characteristic of Spenser's writing as "that same framing of his style to an old rustic language." To do justice to the taste and usage of Spenser in the matter of language, it is necessary to mention a fashion which had been imported into the literature of his time, and from which his style may be regarded as a reaction. With all its greatness this was an age of extravagance. There does not seem to have been any recognized standard of taste, the authority of which was sufficient to restrain intellectual caprice. A style of writing and speaking known as Euphuism had been introduced. The name was taken from Euphues, the title of a love-story, by John Lyly, who borrowed the word from the schoolmaster of Roger Ascham, who, in turn, had taken it from Plato. It had at least the merit of contributing a new word to the language which is still retained. The fashion itself came from Italy, the birth-place of so many fashions, both good and bad in that age. The young wits who affected culture and aimed at shining in literary circles brought back with them from their travels in southern Europe a degenerate taste which had come to prevail in place of the simpler and purer manners of the old Italian republics. Euphuism consisted of verbal eccentricities and antitheses, elaborate puns, puerile alliterations, and a rank luxuriance of often ill-assorted metaphors. Sidney has thus described it in his *Apology for Poetry*: "One time with so far-fetched words that many seem monsters, but most

seem strangers to any poor Englishman ; another time with coursing of a letter as if they were bound to follow the method of a dictionary ; another time with figures and flowers extremely winter-starved."

Spenser seems to have set his mind against the extravagances of Euphuism, and, as if in scorn of this effeminacy of language, adopted a style characteristic of an earlier period, which he doubtless regarded as purer and simpler, but which was growing or had already grown obsolete. Thus we find the frequent use of the participial prefix *y* as in *ycladd*, *yplast*, the old participial suffix *and* as in *trenchand glitterand*, the verbal termination *en*, both as the suffix of the infinitive mood and also of the plural of the present indicative. There is also a considerable number of archaic terms, and altogether his style when compared with that of his contemporaries suggests a studied use of peculiarities that were ancient or dying out. There are indications of a northern dialect, especially in his *Shepherd's Calendar*, doubtless derived from his residence in Lancashire, where he spent some years near Hurstwood in the neighbourhood of Burnley. It is not without interest to Lancashire readers to know that the traditions and scenery of Pendle Forest probably coloured the descriptions of witchcraft and enchantment in the *Faerie Queene*. He sometimes assumed an unusual licence in coining, abbreviating, or transforming words, occasionally with no higher purpose than to meet the necessities of the rhyme. But although the language of Spenser may in point of taste be open to criticism, yet it cannot be doubted that his copious vocabulary of old as well as contemporary words, and especially the great variety of old inflexions which he retained, imparted to it a special adaptation to the exigencies of rhyme and rhythm. Indeed a reader of Elizabethan literature may be excused for doubting whether the language

has not lost nearly as much as it has gained by the changes which it has since undergone. As the vehicle of profound and exact thought is the English of to-day, superior to that of Bacon, can it produce more dignified and stately prose than that of Hooker, is it more musical than the language of the *Faerie Queene*, or better adapted to embody every possible form of human thought and passion than that of Shakspeare?

★ Our greatest imaginative writers have not hesitated to draw the materials for their works from pre-existing sources. The originality which belonged to them did not consist in evolving all their characters, situations, and descriptions from their own brain, but in seizing upon obscure or forgotten materials, and so working them up afresh as to invest them with new meanings and new forms of interest and beauty. In point of originality we cannot claim for Spenser the highest merit, but we may say that the materials he uses seldom suffer under his treatment, and that, generally speaking, he touched nothing which he did not adorn.

The stories of classic mythology are ever at the service of poets, and of these Spenser has made ample use. But he does not hesitate to depart from the ancient forms of mythical story when it suits his purpose. He imparts to classical mythology a mediæval colouring adapting it to the forms of thought of a later age. But he was much more indebted to Ariosto and Tasso than to the ancients. Especially we cannot help comparing him with Ariosto, with whom he has much in common. The *Faerie Queene*, like the *Orlando Furioso*, may be regarded as a romance of chivalry. Both are allegorical, though in this respect Spenser greatly improved upon his model in a more earnest moral purpose and weightier meanings. Prince Arthur plays an important part in each poem; and the dragons, monsters, knights, and ladies have the same features and

characters in each. They are thus works of the same type; the one, however, embodying Italian spirit and feeling; the other instinct throughout with English intellect, energy, and opinion. Spenser has sometimes copied descriptions from his predecessor, and followed them even to points of detail. Had he been more anxious about his reputation for originality he might have pursued a different course; but in justice to him it must be admitted that the resemblance is chiefly in points which characterized the romantic poetry of the age in general, and which Spenser probably regarded as the common property of poets.

Spenser made use of the metrical romances and old ballad poetry. There are some indications of his having read the *Seven Champions of Christendom*, and the description of the battle between the Red Cross Knight and the Dragon undoubtedly bears a close resemblance to a similar scene in *Sir Bevis of Hampton*, an old poem which had become famous two hundred years before, and with which as a fine specimen of popular romance written in the rugged rhyme, characteristic of the ancient ballad poetry, Spenser was no doubt familiar.

Lord Buckhurst's *Induction to the Mirrour for Magistrates*, which appeared in 1563, is distinguished for its bold conception and effective treatment of allegorical characters. Its relation to Spenser's poem is that of an antecedent allegorical work of remarkable power which must have been known to Spenser, and may have served to elevate his conception of the value of this form of literary composition, besides presenting a most successful example of its use.

But in this particular connection the most interesting feature of Spenser's work is found in the use made of the Arthurian legends. There are few things in connection with English literature more striking and curious than the amazing vitality and perpetual re-appearance in different ages and

under new forms of the group of legends associated with Prince Arthur and the knights of the round table. We cannot conjecture how long they may have existed in an unwritten form amongst the literature of the bards, when the rocks and hills were vocal

To high-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's lay.

Our early chroniclers, not caring to distinguish between fact and fiction, and seemingly quite incapable of such an exercise of the critical faculty, embodied the achievements of the British hero in their narratives. Geoffrey of Monmouth, Wace, and Layamon have handed down to modern times the mediæval conception of the great hero of romance. The introduction of a Christian element into the story is a curious feature in the development of the legend. It is due to Walter Map, who incorporated with it the legend of *The Holy Graal* in the latter part of the twelfth century. The sentiment of an age in which church influence and ideas predominated required the introduction of a spiritual element, and it was thus supplied, ministering without any sense of incongruity to the intellectual appetite of the time. Later still the story was taken up afresh by the early ballad makers, and in successive ages the old myths greeted the ears of new generations. And in our own day one of our most accomplished literary craftsmen has not disdained to work up the old materials afresh and to hand them down in modern and more polished forms, to be again reproduced perhaps and remodelled to gratify the taste of still future ages.

Spenser in his turn seized upon the creations of the old romance, and, with the alchemy of a true poet, transmuted the metal so often used before and since into the fine gold of his own imagination. In his poem Arthur is the grand ideal—the type and embodiment of all the virtues. He is even more than this, for in the doctrinal system of Spenser,

which in one of its interpretations underlies the allegory, he represents the divine help or grace of God which intervenes when human effort is exhausted. The redeeming features of chivalry, the salt which so long kept it sweet and gave it vitality, were its lofty ideal of knighthood, and the respect it inculcated for woman. The former finds its noblest representative in Spenser's Prince Arthur, and surely womanhood never wooed the imagination in a purer form than that of Una, in whose presence the savage lion forgets his fury, and whose

Angels face

As the great eye of heaven shyned bright,
And made a sunshine in the shadie place.

Spenser enters upon an adventurous flight when he describes this great hero of the poem. His glittering armour flashed far away, like the glancing rays of the sun. His bauldrick contained precious stones which shone like the stars, especially

One pretious stone

Of wondrous worth, and eke of wondrous might
Shapt like a ladies head, exceeding shone,
Like Hesperus emongst the lesser lights.

To this was suspended his sword, "in ivory sheeth" carved with curious designs,

Whose hilts were burnisht gold, and handle strong
Of mother pearle, and buckled with a thong.

The crest of his helmet bore a dragon, with greedy paws and golden wings, whose hideous head seemed to throw

From flaming mouth bright sparkles fiery red
That suddaine horror to fainte hartes did show.

His plume bent and quivered with the softest breathing of the air, like the blossoms of an almond tree on the top "of greene Selinis." But the masterpiece of his armour was the shield too gorgeous to be seen of mortal eye, and therefore usually kept covered; not made of inferior metals, but of pure diamond, one entire mould hewn from the

adamant rock. Its brightness was only disclosed on great emergencies, when he would dismay huge monsters, or daunt unequal armies, or affright the flying heavens. It had a like virtue to the spear of Ithuriel, which brought back the tempter from his assumed shape to his true likeness.

Him thus intent Ithuriel with his spear
Touch'd lightly; for no falsehood can endure
Touch of celestial temper.

In like manner, before the piercing splendour of Arthur's shield, the disguises of hypocrisy and falsehood instantly vanished.

But all that was not such as seemd in sight
Before that shield did fade and suddene fall.

The frightful head of Medusa, every hair of which was a hissing serpent, and which froze the spectator into stone, was not more terrible.

And when him list the raskall routes appall,
Men into stones therewith he could transmew,
And stones to dust, and dust to nought at all:
And when him list the prouder looks subdew
He would them gazing blind, or turne to other hew.

Such is the Prince Arthur of the old legends revived and reproduced in the gorgeous colourings of Spenser's imagination. The early hero of the round table is adorned with all the embellishments of the later chivalry, and has adapted himself to the standard of poetic taste in the sixteenth century.

✧ The exaggeration and transcendentalism of Spenser's descriptions must be judged by contemporary taste and feeling. Even poetry, which naturally delights in strong and varied colouring, assumes a more modest and sober hue in the nineteenth century than it did in the days of Elizabeth. The muse of poetry is endowed with immortal youth, but time seems still in some degree to have mellowed her luxuriance. But these were the days of young romance. Science

and discovery had not yet stripped the earth of its mystery. The chilling scepticism of science had not paralyzed the energy of belief. The dreams of alchemy and the enchantments of witchcraft were then and long after even to the most enlightened intellects among the articles of belief. The popular imagination loved to traverse the regions of the wonderful and the unknown. When Othello confessed to having used the witchcraft known to all ages, and to having whispered into the ear of Desdemona stories of

The Cannibals that each other eat,
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders,

he was not drawing upon his own imagination, but only repeating stories, however wild, which travellers had brought home from the far west. Much of this exaggeration and high colouring is foreign to our habits of thought, and seems to stand in need of an apology. But if we would do justice to the England of Shakspeare and Spenser we must somewhat modify our standards of literary criticism, and assume a standpoint from which we may, as far as possible, see it as it appeared to observing and reflecting men of that age.

Being in order of time the next great poet after Chaucer, the question naturally arises, In what relation does he stand to his predecessor? He was undoubtedly an admirer and student of the older poet, and the influence of this study was apparent in his vocabulary and in his use of certain grammatical forms. Each of them worked under the influence of Italian genius, Chaucer walking in the footsteps of Boccaccio and Spenser following Ariosto. They moved in the same social rank, each of them being connected with the Court, and familiar with the highest classes of society in his own day. They were both born in London, both died there, and they lie together in Westminster Abbey, the natural resting-place of great Englishmen.

But when we place their two works side by side, we cannot say that the second owed much to the first, except as its author might be stimulated and inspired by a great example. In the exercise of their natural genius they travelled along different lines, not only gathering their materials from widely different sources, but treating them by literary methods which had little or nothing in common. Chaucer writes like a man conversant with the world, and an observer of human nature. He had a strong sense of humour and an eye for eccentricity, which he delighted to depict, and perhaps to exaggerate. He deals in broad representations and strongly-marked outlines, often disfigured by coarseness which not even the manners of his age can altogether excuse. There is a sense of realistic power, the colouring is laid on with a lavish hand, and little is left to the reader's imagination. We are in the streets of London, in the houses of the citizens, their inns and places of business. We hear the conversation, the coarse witticisms, the peals of laughter. It is the busy world, it is English life.

But there is nothing of all this in Spenser. He lifts us at once into a sphere that is unreal and imaginary, and though we find in his poem the public characters and the intellectual and political conflicts of the time, we have to look for them in double meanings, and track them through the mazes of enchantment. When we turn from Chaucer to Spenser, we leave the warm, life-like characters that we had almost begun to regard as real flesh and blood, and find ourselves surrounded only by personifications and abstract ideals. We miss the realities of life, its action, passion, sinning, suffering. It is like passing from the busy haunts of men into a gallery of sculpture. We are enraptured by the miracles of art and beauty, but it is the loveliness of art, not of nature; there are no pulsations, no heart-throbbings beneath the pale marble.

In dramatic power, therefore, Chaucer is far ahead of Spenser, or perhaps it would be better to say that writing with a different view and in a different spirit, he has developed a power of this kind at which Spenser never even aimed. But Spenser wrote with a purpose. While Chaucer probably never looked beyond his work to any moral purpose it might be expected to serve, Spenser deliberately decided upon the object which his poem should be made to serve and never lost sight of it. The *Faerie Queene* is full of lofty ideals. Its author endeavoured to embody in it all that was noblest and best in sentiment, feeling, heroic achievement, and literary culture, in the age to which he belonged. When Chaucer wrote his principal work he was living under a weak Government and a feeble monarch, and the country was rapidly drifting in the direction of catastrophe and revolution. A poet of Spenser's temperament would have found nothing heroic to inspire his muse. Chaucer did not look for it. He took the world as he found it, and depicted men and women as he saw them. When we look for the connecting link between the two, we find it not in points of similarity but in their relations to our common literature. Different, even, contrasted in many respects, and representing modes of thought and literary fashions far apart in point of time, they are still two names, each of which seems naturally to suggest the other, and which are associated with the most enduring monuments of literary power that the English mind up to nearly the close of the sixteenth century had produced.

At the time of Spenser's death there were living two brothers, Phineas and Giles Fletcher, whose subsequent writings may be regarded as an index of the influence of Spenser's work over a certain class of poetic minds. They belonged to a literary family, being cousins to the more celebrated John Fletcher, the collaborator with Beaumont in

that celebrated literary partnership which produced many well-known dramas. Their father, Dr. Giles Fletcher, had been ambassador in Russia, and fancied that he had solved a problem which, however, seems still to exercise some minds at the present day. He thought he had discovered that the Tartars were the lost tribes of Israel. This historical discovery, however, scarcely had fair play, for the book was suppressed by the English Government. His two sons were clergymen, and wrote under an influence inspired by admiration for the *Faerie Queene*. The elder brother, Phineas, published the *Purple Island* in 1633, though it was written much earlier. It is an allegorical poem, of which the subject is man, represented, however, under the figure of an island. The idea is taken from the second book of Spenser's poem, in which the body is described as the castle of the soul. Fletcher is at no pains to conceal his obligations to Spenser, for whom he entertained the deepest reverence. The poem is marked by ingenuity and poetical refinement, but being an avowed imitation the highest degree of merit could not belong to it. It is a long poem, with much minute description and elaborate detail, tedious as a whole, but with striking passages, the best of them very much in Spenser's manner. It is the work of a pupil whose eye was ever turned reverentially to his master.

The work of the younger brother was issued many years earlier, and was on a different theme, *Christ's Victory and Triumph*. It is equally pervaded, however, by the Spenserian influence, and some passages are written in obvious imitation of the acknowledged model. The subject is one difficult to treat suitably in an allegorical form, and the author is not uniformly successful; but his work, like that of his brother, is not an unworthy echo of the nobler music by which it was inspired.

✦ In perusing the first book of the *Faerie Queene*, the reader

is often reminded of another allegorical work much better known and much more generally appreciated. The *Pilgrim's Progress* seems in many points so clearly foreshadowed in this book, that we cannot help considering with some interest the precise relation in which they stand to each other. Was Bunyan's work a popular version of the *Faerie Queene*, or to what extent was he indebted to the Elizabethan poet? That there is in some respects a remarkable similarity cannot be doubted. One can imagine the interest and surprise of an unlettered reader of Bunyan making acquaintance for the first time with the Red Cross Knight and saying to himself, Why, this is poor Christian, only he must have had some strange good fortune, for he is turned gentleman and dubbed a knight. He is now "pricking o'er the plain," but he used to trudge painfully on foot. He had no dwarf or other attendant to assist him, but bore his burden on his own back. He had no Una to guide him, but Evangelist did this office for him sometimes. His armour is undoubtedly the same, he wears the same helmet, and fights with the same sword; he has still the shield of faith and the breastplate of righteousness, but they are more polished and glittering than of yore. Archimago—that must be giant Pope, and the Cave of Despair must be very near Doubting Castle, where Giant Despair tortured his victims. We know all about the fight with the dragon, only his proper name is Apollyon. The wood of error was perhaps the enchanted ground or the place where Christian fell into the Slough of Despond, and the House of Pride was very likely in the neighbourhood of Vanity Fair. Fidelia and the Mansion of Holiness must mean the Interpreter and his house, where Christian had so many things explained to him, and the Hill of Contemplation—surely this must be one of the Delectable Mountains and the Land of Beulah cannot be far off.

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Is this, then, a case of plagiarism? We think not. It is very unlikely that the *Faerie Queene* ever came in Bunyan's way. The main points of the allegory were taken in both cases from the *Bible*, which was open to Bunyan as well as Spenser, and the experience of a pure and earnest soul struggling after excellence supplied the rest. Bunyan was little indebted to books. He graduated only at the College of Elstow, where the students assembled on the village green to play at toss-penny, and where he sometimes committed the heinous sin of jibing at an old woman on her way to church. He sometimes aspired to the society of the bell-ringers, which was the highest round of the social ladder he ever attained in his native place, though he afterwards made acquaintance with Sir Matthew Hale, and was for twelve years a guest of the Bedford gaoler. His library was large, it numbered two volumes, the *Bible* and the *Book of Martyrs*; but its largeness consisted not so much in the number of the volumes as in their suggestiveness and abundance of matter. His literary associate was his little blind daughter, who helped him to make tagged laces, and whose sightless eyeballs doubtless called up many visions of that land where there shall be no darkness. We may depend upon it if Bunyan had owed anything to the *Faerie Queene* he would have told us. He was charged with plagiarism in his lifetime, not that there was ever any evidence, but because people could not believe that any good thing could come out of the tinker's wallet. He scornfully repudiated the imputation in homely but trenchant verses, and we cannot doubt that if he had consciously borrowed from any source, honest John would have had some doggrel rhymes at hand in which to tell us of it.

It is indeed not impossible nor even unlikely that by indirect means, in conversation or otherwise, Bunyan may have met with allusions to Spenser's allegory or quotations

from it, and these may have proved the fruitful germ in his mind of much that is excellent in his own work. Indebtedness of this kind there may well have been without conscious imitation ; more than this is incompatible both with what we know of Bunyan's nature and the freshness and originality which are conspicuous in his work.

The writings of Milton, however, furnish the most striking example of the triumph of Spenser's genius in the influence which it exercised in moulding the taste, and in innumerable instances imparting shape and fashion to the conceptions of a mind still more powerful than his own. All that can be done here is to indicate the manner in which this influence operated and some of the marks by which it may be recognized, though it must be admitted that the relations of these two poets to each other is a subject worthy of much fuller and more exhaustive treatment.

There was great similarity between the two men, both in their natural genius and moral temperament, and also in the particular forms of mental culture which they pursued. They were both distinguished by much intellectual refinement as well as strength. They were highly-educated men, representing the scholarly culture of the best minds of their respective periods. They were both intensely earnest and intensely honest men, each of them throwing his whole soul into the conflicts that were going on around him. Yet they were both under the influence of ideal rather than utilitarian or practical standards. Both are open to the charge of being theorists, and aiming at what was unattainable. Society may be thought to be incapable of that prolonged and sustained effort that is necessary to rise to their level. Each witnessed in his life-time an unusual development of national energy, in each case followed by the inevitable reaction, which Spenser did not live to see, but from which Milton retired into solitude to produce his *Paradise Lost*.

Several of the early poems of Milton were evidently produced under the Spenserian influence. He began to write poetry in early life, but not until he had read much, and was familiar with the style and manner of Spenser, who was precisely the poet to influence an ardent and susceptible genius. During a certain period Milton seems to have yielded himself without resistance to this fascination. He had drunk from Spenser deep draughts of delight. He had listened to the music of his poetry, and breathed its odours, until it formed for a time a large part of his own intellectual life. At this period he wrote "*Il Penseroso*," in which he has characterized in choice language the solemn music of Spenser's lines, the romance and mystery of his stories, and their pregnant double meanings:

And if aught else, great bards beside,
In sage and solemn tunes have sung
Of turneys, and of trophies hung;
Of forests and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.

The manner in which Milton's imagination worked under the charm of Spenser's influence is seen sometimes in the outward form to which his poetry accommodates itself. He adopts partially the Spenserian stanza, showing that his own thoughts adapted themselves to the sweet music to which his mind had become habituated. There is, however, in each case, some modification of the original stanza. We meet also with Spenserian words, and with phrases which recall the lines and imagery of Spenser.

When Milton attempted his more "adventurous song" he had reached a period of life at which the mind is less open to impressions from other minds; and he had besides deliberately entered upon an untrodden path. It was not a line of imitative effort upon which he entered but

Things unattempted yet in prose or rime.

Originality was therefore a necessity to him. Like the angel of his own creation he had to

Tempt with wand'ring feet
The dark unbottom'd infinite abyss,
And through the palpable obscure find out
His uncouth way.

Still Milton's writings, perhaps more than those of any other modern author, bear the traces of vast reading and indefatigable industry. He had acquired and assimilated the learning of ancient and modern times. No man ever lived with a more omnivorous intellectual appetite, and the results of his reading were at his command to a degree rarely equalled. The consequence is that his writings sparkle with felicities of thought and expression for which he is partly indebted to earlier authors, many of these coming from Latin and Greek sources, others from authors of a later date, and of the latter class more from Spenser than any other. It is not to be supposed that this is a mere transference by Milton of other men's ideas or choice forms of expression into his own writings. He is not chargeable with coarse plagiarism of this kind. But he had an unparalleled facility in seizing upon, and adapting to his own purpose, suggestive thoughts and expressions. Where there was a germ of undeveloped beauty, he could as it were by a single touch bring out all the secret virtue it contained. It was as if he saw more in a thought or phrase than the original author himself had seen in it. Conceptions imperfectly formed or inadequately expressed acquire when conveyed in Miltonic language their full and harmonious proportions. Many of Milton's most felicitous phrases may be thus accounted for. His memory has supplied him with the material from which the most exquisite forms of expression and conception have been evolved. The danger of unduly extending the limits of this paper renders it undesirable to illustrate these remarks by quoted passages, and this is also the less necessary since passages of this kind are given by many commentators whose works are easily accessible.

It may be allowed, however, to quote one remarkable instance in which Milton is indebted to Spenser, not exactly in the way just described, but to a much greater extent. One of the most striking figures in the *Paradise Lost* is a conception previously found in Hesiod, Horace, and in the *Faerie Queene*. Milton, it will be seen, has presented to us that particular form of this conception given by Spenser with many of his details, though with some elaboration of his own. When "the flying fiend" would emerge from the gates of hell, he is stopped by the monstrous forms of sin and death. Milton's description of the former is a faithful transcript of the representation of the monster Error in Book i. of the *Faerie Queene*, as will be seen on comparison. The following is from Spenser:—

His glistening armor made
A little glooming light, much like a shade ;
By which he saw the ugly monster plaine,
Halfe like a serpent, horribly displaide,
But th' other halfe did woman's shape retaine,
Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile disdaine.

And as she lay upon the durtie ground,
Her huge long tail her den all overspred,
Yet was in knots, and many boughtes upwound
Pointed with mortall sting. Of her there bred
A thousand yong ones, which she dayly fed,
Sucking upon her poisonous dugs ; each one
Of sundrie shapes, yet all ill-favored :
Soone as that uncouth light upon them shone,
Into her mouth they crept, and suddain all were gone.

Milton has reproduced not only the general conception of the creature half-woman, half-serpent, but its horrible details—the foulness, the folded tail, the mortal sting, the hellish brood swarming around their dam, and, when disturbed, taking refuge "within unseen."

Before the gates there sat
On either side a formidable shape ;
The one seem'd woman to the waist, and fair,
But ended foul in many a scaly fold,

Voluminous and vast, a serpent arm'd
With mortal sting; about her middle round
A cry of hell-hounds never ceasing bark'd
With wide Cerberean mouths full loud, and rung
A hideous peal: yet when they list, would creep,
If aught disturb'd their noise, into her womb,
And kennel there, yet there still bark'd and howl'd.

This comparison of two closely-related men of genius, however attractive and suggestive the theme may be, must not be further pursued.

After Milton we find very few indications of Spenser's influence in English literature. The Restoration brought with it not only a change in outward manners, but also a change of intellectual tastes and moral judgments. The earnestness, the moral purity, the grand ideals of Spenser went out of fashion. It was impossible that the whole mind of England should have degenerated even then, but the temper of the Court, and it must be admitted the prevailing taste of society, favoured shallowness, flippancy, and a thinly-veiled immorality. For nearly a hundred years after Milton, Spenser seemed to have sunk into oblivion, and when there began to be a revived attention to his writings, it was chiefly to subject them to a criticism founded upon ignorance of their true character. At the present day Spenser does not lack appreciative readers; and in the times which it may not be too sanguine to anticipate, when there shall prevail a more widely extended and more carefully cultivated literary taste, their number will doubtless be increased. He has bequeathed to later generations a literary heirloom, "the precious life-blood of a master spirit;" and so long as Englishmen remain true to what is greatest and noblest in their traditions, his name will be amongst those which his countrymen will not willingly let die.





ON POPULAR TASTE AND CRITICISM, AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON ART.

BY CHARLES HARDWICK.

IT is generally understood in the "educated" sections of society, professional or general, that, previously to the assumption of the dignity and responsibility of "professor" of, no matter what—law, divinity, or physic; literature or moral philosophy; the construction of railways, household furniture, or penny trumpets—the party so assuming should, at least *ostensibly*, have devoted a portion of his time to the prosecution of some prescribed course of study, or have apprenticed himself for a specified period to some individual of practical knowledge in the particular art or handicraft most attractive to his genius or inclination. The affectation of much learning or skill in such matters, without some kind of preparatory training, might occasionally subject the enterprising individual to a little rather rough verbal usage, if not to other species of personal annoyance still more disagreeable. And yet, singularly enough, many of the very persons who thus severely chastise untrained intruders upon the domain of their "mystery" or "craft," fancy themselves perfectly endowed by nature with all the requisites of *fine art criticism*, and qualified extempore to deliver oracular decisions respecting the merits or demerits of works resulting from a combination

of original creative genius with highly-trained, special, practical intelligence. Artistic technicalities are frequently projected with marvellous fluency and a flippant *nonchalance* from the tongues of individuals unacquainted with their precise technical usage, or their higher æsthetic or purely intellectual application. Hence the force of Byron's stinging satire :—

Away ! there need no words nor terms precise,
The paltry jargon of the marble mart,
Where pedantry gulls folly.

There can be no question that the amount of cultivated sensuous perception, as well as the degree of intellectual appreciation of the truthful in art by its patrons, in any age or country—yea, even by the relatively impecunious gazers on the exhibited specimens—exercises immense influence upon the quality and general character of the mass of the productions themselves. Mons. Fetis, the eminent French critic, has truly observed that “there is a reciprocal action of the audience upon the artist, and of the artist upon the audience, which creates the *charm or the torment* of both.” It may be perfectly true that the mission of a man of genius is emphatically to *teach*; to rise superior to conventional influence or fashionable caprice; to anticipate, with a kind of prophetic insight, truths hitherto unknown or imperfectly recognized; to give to the age some of *his*, as well as “*its*, form and pressure;” to direct it onwards towards nobler aims and higher purposes, and not to pander to its limited capacity, its unenlightened prejudices, or its degrading idolatries. Yet the man endowed with the highest attributes of genius, notwithstanding its supposed independence of all earthly trammels, *must of necessity* condescend to speak to his audience, through the medium of his art, in a language and upon a class of subjects which that audience can understand, and the beauties

and subtleties of which it can, to some extent, appreciate. If he rebels against this necessity, the more adaptable nature of less gifted competitors will not only enable them to command public attention and applause, but to reap the more tangible rewards of intellectual labour; while the greater minds, with more refined sensitiveness, shrinking from what to them appears, and perhaps may be, a degradation of their functions, are suffered to pine away in poverty and practical idleness. It is therefore desirable, not only in the worldly interest of the higher intellectual capacity, but for the progression and advancement of art itself, that the dispensers of artistic reputation, whether they be merely readers, gazers, listeners, or purchasers, should become to some extent *educated* rather than merely *spontaneous* censors.

One class of critics appear to delight in driving all *scientific* or tangible common-sense inference in matters of art back to the domain of mysticism and mental obscurity, as though they were religiously impressed with a conviction that all true sense of beauty or sublimity depended for its existence on man's limited comprehension thereof. Even if this view were a sound one, there is no occasion to fear that any power or faculty in the possession of humanity will ever so far inform man as to make the work of the Omnipotent otherwise than sufficiently mysterious to him, whether the desirable mystery appertains to fine-art enjoyment or to scientific and philosophical research. Every higher plateau on the mountain side of knowledge gained by the intellectual foot of man exhibits before his eye a still grander landscape, with an horizon enshrouded in still deeper and mightier mystery than that which previously bounded his mental vision.

It is to some extent in art as it is in more material production, the quantity and quality of the supply is regulated

chiefly by that of the demand. Not only is the cultivation of a pure, artistic taste amongst a people a source of domestic and social enjoyment, but it forms one of the stoutest buttresses for the protection of a nation's renown from the ravages of time. It is an intuitive conviction of the human mind that great works of art cannot, as a rule, be conceived and executed without a corresponding sympathy in the minds of the mass to whom such works are addressed. So it is with heroism. A nation of poltroons could not propagate a single hero worthy of the name. Hence the national reverence for the great of their kindred. The individual lustre is regarded but as the culmination of qualities inherent in the common stock. Every Englishman feels his own intellectual importance enhanced by the fame of Shakspeare, as much as he feels that the name of Nelson is a guarantee of his personal courage. The old glory and renown of the states of Greece would unquestionably yet shine forth with anything but a dull and flickering lustre, if all the "art treasures" they have bequeathed to posterity had been reduced to dust by the heels of the remorseless barbarian hordes who trampled out the last living sparks of their freedom and civilization. Much, however, of the exact knowledge of antiquity has faded before the progressive development of modern science. Their glory is here but relative to their age and the then general knowledge of mankind. But it is not so with art. What really is beautiful and true in one generation is beautiful and true for ever. We may reject the theological dogmas embodied in the presumed genesis and doings of the gods and goddesses of the heathen mythology, but the artistic or æsthetic truth of the *Iliad* is, nevertheless, recognized by the most orthodox of critics.

Sir Charles Eastlake, P.R.A., in the appendix to the First Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts, in 1842, says:

"It must always be borne in mind that the aims of the artists are not to be considered as accidental predilections apart from the public feeling, but as representing a portion of that feeling. However variously modified by other influences the formative arts must always express the manners, the taste, and in some measure even the intellectual habits of the nation in which they are cultivated." After referring to the influence of governmental and other official patronage, he adds: "The proper and peculiar tendency, the physiognomy, so to speak, of national taste, is to be detected in more spontaneous aims; in the direction which the arts have taken when they have been the free exponents of the intellectual and moral habits of society."

There can be no doubt that the popular taste did exercise immense influence on the artistic productions of Greece and Rome. Indeed, the most striking distinction between modern and ancient art lies in the fact that the latter appealed directly to the national sympathies, while the former has mainly courted the approval of limited coteries with special art prepossessions, and who dogmatically assume an almost exclusive right to the sobriquet of "men of taste." The chief function of many of these limited coteries appears to be mutual recrimination. They are invariably egotistical and narrow in their sympathies, and lack that catholicity of spirit so necessary to the full recognition of all the phases and features incident to the complete development of the national art instinct. Poetry, in the earlier portion of the historic period, during the development of its vigorous youth and lusty manhood, was composed expressly for public recitation. Homer did not commit to paper his immortal heroics for the solitary perusal of "men of taste" or students of literature. The blind genius of antiquity *recited* to the Grecian populace, in the streets of their cities, those marvellous compositions

which have not only fixed indelibly upon the memory of mankind a record of the valour and renown of this heroic people, but have commanded the willing homage of succeeding generations as works of consummate artistic power. The rhapsodist or public reciter occupied a distinguished place amongst the teachers of Athens and other cities of Greece, and shared the applause of the public with men of genius or talent in other directions. The populace were often invited to criticise the works of the first painters and sculptors of their age, and even Euripides's magnificent tragic genius bowed before the expression of the popular will. But this will must have been subjected, to a large extent, to a cultivated intelligence, or the master spirits in art would unquestionably have sunk beneath its pressure.

It cannot be doubted that the general public taste in England is yet relatively low, notwithstanding the very evident improvement, in some directions, which has latterly been manifested. Do not nearly all our public squares and thoroughfares loudly proclaim this fact? "Committees of taste" have been appointed to select designs for public buildings and public monuments, and yet singularly enough we possess but few which have emanated from this source to which we can point with any degree of justifiable pride. The best monuments of England's artistic power, if we except the works of some of her greatest poets, and at least one of her musical composers, are yet to be found in the remains of her ancient abbeys, cathedrals, and other ecclesiastical edifices. These were produced by men whose heart and soul, whose sentiment and feeling, inspired and directed their artistic skill and scientific knowledge. But they appealed to the same instincts in the public breast from which their own conceptions germinated. Very many of those thus appealed to might not themselves know *why* the majestic edifices in which they worshipped impressed

their hearts with feelings of such deep and involuntary reverence; but they *felt* the influence notwithstanding, and gave audible expression to it. This race of artists has passed away, but their works, whether presented in the form of the well-preserved minster, or in the crumbling, arch-pierced abbey wall, with its fantastic coronal of sombre ivy and gay gilli-flowers, still exercise the mighty power of true art upon the impressionable human soul.

There are two difficulties in the way of the formation of a sound public taste in this country, and these are indifference on the one hand and presumption on the other. One section of the public seem to say they "don't care; they don't know anything about art, and they don't want to know." Another section think that they know all that is essential to criticism, by virtue of the innate taste with which it has pleased God to endow them. Well, special divine gifts in matters artistic are very valuable things, no doubt; but it unfortunately happens that we possess no infallible intuitive test of their existence. Consequently very little native capability, accompanied by much self-esteem, may, nay does, too often, serve as an indication of innate genius in the judgment of the self-styled "gifted one."

It is not an uncommon thing to hear an uneducated lover of music express his contempt for the compositions of the "great masters." He will dilate with ecstasy on the beauty of a popular ballad, and express his indifference to the "tiresome rubbish" of Bach, Spohr, or Beethoven. I have witnessed many unseemly squabbles of this character. Of course, a cultivated amateur, who has by patient study penetrated into the inner beauty of the works of the great composers, is horrified at what he deems so great a profanation, and he sometimes deals out pretty liberally upon the head of the offender the full contents of the vial of his critical wrath. Yet the ballad lover erred chiefly in his

language. He, for want of habitual acquaintance and certain preparatory study, could not understand the drift of the great composer, or perhaps he might, from other causes, be incapable of ever rising with him "to the height of his great argument," however carefully he might have been educated. His error mainly consisted in the denunciation as "tiresome rubbish" of that which he could not understand. If he had said that he *preferred to hear* the ballad, or a quadrille, a popular opera air or an overture, because they afforded him greater gratification, he would have been stating that which was simply the truth, without the insistence of any undue critical acumen on his part. The fact that the *Paradise Lost* of Milton and the *Inferno* of Dante require infinitely more erudition, for their full appreciation and enjoyment, than much of our justly popular minor poetry is no argument either for or against their æsthetic qualities. The educated require intellectual enjoyment as well as the uneducated, and they possess, as a matter of course, a more fastidious artistic perception. True art, being universal in its application, of course, provides suitable food for the subjective requirements of all. I never remember a lover of Beethoven, however, who did not feel intense admiration for "Auld Robin Gray," "Sweet Home," or "Within a Mile of Edinburgh Town." They simply love both forms of art, without disparagement of either. Any man may honestly and wisely express what he feels; but he has no right to expect another person to ignore his own impressions at his simple bidding. Mons. Fétis insists, with truth, that the merely *spontaneous* critic ought to confine himself to the expression of his *likes* and *dislikes*. From the *educated* or *professional* critic he demands a *reason* for the faith that is in him, or he denies equally his right to dictate to the public what *is* and what *is not* good or bad in art.

The true test of a critical capacity is to be found, not so much in what the censor condemns, but in the quality of his praise, and in the manner in which this praise is expressed. To point out satisfactorily the precise amount and quality of artistic merit in a clever work of art is by no means an easy or off-hand task. It requires both patient investigation and a cultivated power of expression. But a few flippant epithets of a denunciatory character are very easily projected from either the lip or the pen, and are generally very amusing to the hearers or readers; but judicious praise cannot always be made "funny," and "smart writing" is much sought after by the public at the present time; hence the large amount of flimsy but brilliant vituperation and cutting sarcasm which too often obtains, especially in our periodical literature. Macaulay, writing to his father in 1826, after an interview with Sydney Smith, makes the following pointed reference to this element in contemporary criticism:—"He praised my articles in the *Edinburgh Review* with a warmth which I am willing to believe was sincere, because he qualified his compliments with several very sensible cautions. My great danger, he said, was that of taking a tone of too much asperity and contempt in controversy. I believe that he is right, and I shall try to mend."

Mere laudation or denunciation does not deserve the name of criticism. The model of the true critic is not the barrister or forensic pleader, but the justice on the bench, who honestly weighs and assesses the evidence, without either favour or prejudice; but the power to do this, to any great extent, is not granted to all critics, professional or otherwise.

Fashion, likewise, has much to do with public taste. A lady will tell you that she "might as well be out of the nation as out of the fashion." A young "gent," likewise, generally

entertains an equally profound conviction of the truth of the apothegm. But unfortunately in the region of art (and it is art of its class) in which their taste is much exercised, *novelty* is the presiding deity. Change from beauty to beauty if you *can*, but *change* you must is the inexorable dogma of professors in this department. Consequently, how intensely ugly, in the course of a few years, even in the eyes of the most slavish votaries of fashion themselves, some of the "sweet bonnets," "elegant robes," "lovely trimming," curiously-cut coats, and "pegtop" trousers become! Truly, novelty is not necessarily beautiful. Sir Joshua Reynolds did well when he recommended the student in art to avoid, as far as possible, the cultivation of his taste in such "schools of deformity" as milliners', tailors', and barbers' establishments. And yet it may be said that the infusion of a deeper appreciation of the fundamental canons respecting artistic beauty in form and colour, amongst the general public, would, to some extent, tend to modify advantageously the caprices and follies of even so obdurate an art-sinner as Mistress Fashion herself. But it is not only in millinery and kindred sartorial work, or upholstery and other branches of decorative art, that Fashion exercises her powerful influence. We have fashionable artists in almost every department, whom the general public patronize and praise, without any very distinct notion why or wherefore, except that it is *the fashion* so to do. The strange fluctuations in artistic reputation owing to this baneful influence are well known, and it is, from its often attendant wealth, so potential a factor that nothing but the diffusion of purer taste and the cultivation of more independent individual criticism can deal effectually with it.

Taste and criticism permeate much deeper into our social and physical existence than is always recognized. It appears to be a law of nature that an infinite variety of

taste should exist among mankind, in order that the whole, or as much of the whole as may be, of the good things spread out for human enjoyment may come in contact with congenial appetites, mental as well as physical. The taste of the palate affords a truthful illustration of the taste of the fancy and the imagination. Indeed the name, as applied to the artistic sense, is figuratively derived from the former. Both are, to a great extent, involuntary, and both are capable of considerable modification by habit and culture.

It is marvellous to what an extent "tastes" or the instinctive perceptive power to readily detect beautiful or picturesque aspects in external nature, differ in different individuals. I have often been surprised, when walking out in an evening in company with otherwise very intelligent friends, to find that during a sunset of unusual splendour, with masses of huge rolling or picturesquely floating crowds, tinged with all the hues of the prism, from gorgeous purple to burnished gold, entirely escape observation until their attention has been called to it by myself. Some of the said friends have recognized the grandeur and beauty of such a scene on their attention being specially directed to it, and have expressed astonishment at the discovery of what to them at the moment appeared to be a demonstration of the relatively imperfect character of their powers of perception. They were mistaken in this conclusion, however. Habitual indifference certainly deadens the perceptive faculties, and the mind, when otherwise actively engaged, equally fails to recognize the flame of the sunset, the roll of the thunder, or the babbling of a brook. On the other hand, art-culture stimulates the faculty, and enables it to detect beauty and grandeur in many of the aspects of nature, which are as "sealed books" to the uninitiated. The highest development of

the artistic instinct ever results from the continued action and reaction of art and the study of nature on each other. Complete isolation deadens the perceptive power in each direction.

That the critical activity attendant upon the popular taste has been, and will continue to be, an important factor in the national art product, seems to me indisputable. Every effort, therefore, in the direction of its healthy culture deserves the countenance and support of all interested. Without entering into a discussion of any of the theories or speculations respecting the higher or more recondite æsthetic principles, or the conditions of their development, which have from time to time engaged the attention of the philosophic and artistic world, it is still, perhaps, possible to extract from out of the somewhat chaotic mass something which admits of being reduced to the level of ordinary everyday intelligence, without the destruction or deterioration of any primary or essential truth. Whatever difficulties may surround the complete comprehension of the philosopher's refined speculations, it may be presumed that the "world" generally, and artists themselves especially, *mean something* by the terms they use in familiar conversation upon art and its productions; yet that one party, on many occasions, does not clearly understand the purpose or meaning of another is demonstrated by the experience of the most humbly educated student or amateur. A concise work on the principles of art and the various means and forms of their exhibition, together with an exposition of the more obvious canons of criticism, solid in its philosophy but popular in its treatment, would prove a valuable boon to our present fine-art educational literature. Such a manual, if sold at a cheap rate at all our public exhibitions, metropolitan and provincial, might furnish a little *terra firma* from which the

student, amateur, or patron could gaze in comparative security on the ocean of pedantic verbiage or soulless rhapsody upon which so many temporary fashionable fine-art reputations are, from time to time, balloted, drifted, and often wrecked.

Little tangible result of the great "Art Treasures" Exhibition at Old Trafford, Manchester, in 1857, has yet been made manifest; but it is satisfactory to find that the art horizon of the district has latterly assumed a somewhat brighter aspect. The School of Art has at length obtained a worthy and suitable habitation; and we may confidently hope in the future for a great enhancement both of the quantity and quality of its teaching power, with corresponding satisfactory results. The Royal Institution will shortly be handed over to the Corporation of Manchester, and a permanent fine-art gallery, containing choice examples, will be open to public inspection free of cost. The effort of Mr. Horsfall and his friends, in a less ambitious direction (though lagging a little at present from the lack of a suitable habitat), when fully carried out, cannot fail to be productive of much benefit. The method proposed of selecting works, or good copies thereof, of marked special excellence in one or more directions, to which the attention of visitors will be called by written or printed labels attached, will prove of much educational value. I am aware that during the exhibition of the Art Treasures at Old Trafford this subject was often discussed. Mr. George Scharf, jun., F.S.A., in his valuable *resumé* of the contents of the temporary palace of art, says: "The portrait gallery, though greatly exceeding the hopes and expectations which were entertained of its importance at the beginning, was *totally lost upon the mass of visitors* for want of labels to indicate the names at least of the persons represented." This, however, was not

Mr. Scharf's department. To him was entrusted the management of the galleries which contained the miscellaneous pictures by the old masters. With the view to render his labour of more practical utility in an educational sense, he says: "I offered the committee to devote a month of my own time, free of expense, if they would only employ persons to write and prepare the labels I might dictate to be affixed to the pictures and the walls. My offer was rejected mainly, it appeared, on the ground that it *might interfere with the sale of the catalogue!*" And yet Mr. Scharf proposed, besides labelling the pictures, to place "writings on the walls to mark the various schools and leading dates." Thus it appears *one* great object, nay, *the* great object, of the appearance of this magnificent meteor in the fine-art atmosphere, was to a great extent nullified, because the executive committee could not resist the temptation of making a little money by the hawking of pamphlets! Truly the commercial element intruded itself rather unseasonably on that occasion into the joint domain of philanthropy and art culture.

I am, however, by no means satisfied that any great loss would ultimately result from the adoption of this course. It is to some extent carried out in the National Gallery and other public collections at the present time. Scores would still purchase catalogues for the sake of reference at home, however fully the subjects might be described on the labels referred to. But what is of greater importance, large numbers would be induced to frequent such exhibitions, who have previously felt uninterested and even fatigued in a very short time, owing to the absence of some such interpretation of the many brilliant enigmas by which they were surrounded. I have watched with care the manner and conduct of the promiscuous public in exhibitions conducted on both principles, at home and abroad,

and I unhesitatingly express my conviction that a vast impetus would be given to popular art education by the general adoption of the plan suggested.

Twenty-one years ago I wrote the following paragraph, the substance of which seems so appropriate to the present time that I cannot conclude this paper better than by its reproduction here :—

“I have heard the question often asked,—Did the Art Treasures Exhibition at Manchester really effect much good in an educational sense? There can be no doubt such a magnificent collection of works of art of the highest class, even although as a rule but imperfectly seen in detail, must have, so to speak, photographed upon the public memory and imagination an image more or less distinct and permanent—an image of beauty and grandeur, of truth and power; and one that must continue to exercise a lasting influence for good. But this influence was by no means so great in kind or so extensive in degree as the recorded statistics of the exhibition would at first sight seem to indicate. Thousands crowded the galleries, with little or no other object or thought than the enjoyment of an agreeable lounge. It was to a large section of the visitors merely a fashionable promenade. The works of art did simply to them good service in the upholstery line; they furnished, in a splendid and costly manner, the magnificent *salon* in which they met their fashionable friends, and gossiped on ordinary topics, varied occasionally with a slight seasoning of verbal commendation of the exhibition as a whole, and of the intensity of the boredom to which they were subjected by visiting friends and relatives who wished to examine and comment upon the merits or defects of individual works of art. To some few students, resident permanently or temporarily in the neighbourhood, no doubt the exhibition proved of immense

advantage. But a crowded gallery is not a place for study. I spent nine days in the exhibition myself, and my great regret was at the close that I had really seen so little of its contents. Yet many of its choicest treasures were old friends that I had met with on previous occasions in various parts of the country. The collection was too large for anything but the making of a grand general impression during the short time it was open to public inspection. If it is permitted to lapse into the domain where past wonders are duly registered, and so to rest, its real influence will eventually prove much less than has been often trumpeted abroad; but if it gives birth to a permanent gallery in Manchester, where the stranger, the student, the manufacturer, and the artizan can at leisure examine minutely the various works of the different periods and the different schools, and cull from them such hints as will enable them gradually to introduce into both fine-art proper and art manufacture an improved interpretation or exposition of artistic truth and beauty, then the monster exhibition will not have run its short-lived but brilliant existence in vain; but it will, truly, not only have inducted a new epoch in the history of art in the north of England, but its influence will be felt throughout every land where British industry, British enterprise, and British skill sustain the glory of the nation in arms, in arts, or commercial enterprise."



GAWSWORTH.

ETCHED BY WALTER TOMLINSON.

GAWSWORTH is situated in the county of Chester, but is easily accessible from Manchester. It is the ancient home of the Fittons—the “Fighting Fittons” they have been called. Although only four miles from the town of Macclesfield, the hamlet presents one of the most perfect pictures of rural seclusion. On one side a glimpse is gained of the hill-country, and on the other there lies the most fertile and deeply-wooded part of Cheshire. The building presented in Mr. Tomlinson’s etching is the parsonage, a black-and-white timbered structure of the fifteenth century. The view is taken from near the church and looking across the fishpond.

Mr. Tomlinson’s skill in etching has long been known to his friends. We understand he is now engaged upon a series of large plates of Stratford-on-Avon and the neighbourhood, taken from paintings recently executed in the locality.





THE ABSENCE OF HUMOUR IN THE NOVEL OF TO-DAY.

BY THOMAS HEIGHWAY.

NOW that the works of Thackeray and Dickens have attained a distinct position as English classics, it would be instructive to know if there are many novels of the day that we buy for our bookshelves, and if either publishers or the reading public would invest cash in an *édition de luxe* of any living author. Have we faith that any contemporary novel will become a standard work to the succeeding generation? The most popular novels of the day may broadly—though inexactly—be divided into two classes: the descriptive, and the psychological. The descriptive author, more or less oblivious of the importance of human nature, occupies himself in the description of small things to the exclusion of great on the principle, it would seem, of taking care of the pence and leaving the gold to its own devices. Mr. William Black is undoubtedly the most able writer of this school, indeed he often uses very charming and pure English; but, when his style avoids affectation, his characters do not, and their affectations are not those which might be expected to belong to them, but are evidently inherited from the author of their being. His men and women are not destined to a long life—there is too much sentiment and too little grit in them. Certainly some of his

earlier novels were interspersed with a few characters, such as the Whaup and Cognette in the *Daughter of Heth*, that made some of us think him a novelist of genius; but when, in *Macleod of Dare*, he tried a higher flight in character study, he showed us that he could not rise above that atmosphere of morbid sentiment and scenery with which he seems to have surrounded himself. The central feature in *Sunrise*—the high feeling of honour that could make a man contemplate assassination rather than break his word—is worthy of a Bab Ballad.

Mr. R. D. Blackmore is perhaps the next most highly-praised writer of this class. He has taught us how to dispense with the definite article, but he has not added much to the permanent in literature. Mr. Blackmore, when read aright, is really very funny. For example, he is treating of what he calls "that exquisite flower of exclusive worship, that gorgeous instance of nature and art combined to do their utmost, the magically beautiful Auricula." Mr. Blackmore thus introduces the flower to his readers and his hero, who, by-the-bye, is represented as a simple-minded gentleman of varied experience, the heir presumptive to an earldom, and a late Captain of Hussars. This unassuming hero, addressing himself to his young daughter, enlarges upon the subject. "This green-edged seedling, beautifully named Dartmoor Oasis, and this grand self, one could gaze at all the day, and above all, this white edge, this glorious white edge, worthily entitled Cream of Devon—have they anything fit to hold a candle to them! Observe the equality of the pips, the perfection of fulness, and true circle of the truss, and the grand columnar, mealy, magnificent, staunchly upright, and splendidly proportioned pillar of the stalk." This passage read for the first time is naturally depressing, but on recovering it will be noted with pleasure that the author possesses a talent for innocent burlesque. *Christowel*,

if read carefully, is mighty entertaining. But Mr. Blackmore does not content himself with burlesque; he has an agricultural-comedy style which is rather exasperating. Possibly it may please dwellers in Arcadia, but it may be doubted if the ordinary bucolic mind is equal to the humour of it. There are many passages of this sort in his works that will at once occur to the constant reader—especially are there some would-be humorous ducks that continually intrude themselves, and which the reader comes to positively hate.

For the writers of psychological novels, in which everything is subordinate to the study of one or two principal characters, there is much greater hopes. Founded probably on the method of Balzac and Madame Dudevant, they want but a little of our English humour to make them more than mere novels of the day. Such are novels like *Probation* and *The First Violin*, and more especially those by Mr. Henry James, jun. His excellencies and his weaknesses are equally apparent. Many reviews have been recently written upon his novels, but the critics generally do not attach sufficient importance to this deficiency of humour.

It may seem strange to omit all mention of the novels of such writers as Trollope, Reade, and Wilkie Collins, but their earlier work was so much better that none of the productions they have recently published can be regarded as really popular novels. It is impossible, however, to exclude Mr. Thomas Hardy even from this brief note. He is the fortunate writer of some of the most justly popular novels of the day. His stories combine a not unwholesome sensationalism with much careful portrayal of character. If he can but once disabuse his mind of the idea that the public really cares for minute analysis of the aspects of inanimate nature he may develop a possibly latent humour, and acquire an insight into the ways of poor human creatures, and so eclipse in future works his present successes.

Messrs. Besant and Rice combine the qualities by which, in this paper, a classification has been attempted. Their plots, without being too sensational, are generally well constructed; the style adapts itself with charming suitability to the subject treated of, and most of the characters, without being at all commonplace, are really flesh-and-blood people; and, above all, the humorous side of things has received its fair share of attention. If here and there some sly touches of satire are too suggestive of the manner of Thackeray, it is an imitation that admirers of the great master will readily pardon. Their novels just miss being great; they are rarely powerful enough; the situations become weakest at the point which should be the climax. This is a great defect, but not so important in a novel as in a play; the want of dramatic power is, however, sufficient to ruin their third volumes. On finishing one of these novels there is a sense of regret that the book was not closed a few chapters earlier. It may be doubted if a very mixed community could be more graphically and at the same time so humorously and so concisely described as is Palmiste Island in the opening chapter of *My Little Girl*. The doings of the *Monks of Thelema* afford the authors opportunities for several smart raps at the prevailing fads of the "cultured"—a satire all the more to be appreciated, as the book was written before Du Maurier and Gilbert had in a manner vulgarized the subject. Dick Mortiboy is probably one of the most original characters in modern fiction; the notion of creating this loose, but shrewd and good natured, scamp and placing him in a slow old-fashioned village, there to preach upon the duty of discontent and the vices of respectability, is indeed a touch of genius. Again, *The Golden Butterfly* is a novel of more originality than one expects to find in latter-day literature. The spirit of the work appears to be compounded out of Thackeray and

Gilbert, and if the blend is not very potent, it is still sufficiently exhilarating, and is a decided quickener of brain action. One can discern boundless opportunities for novelists in this notion of introducing individuals, with extraordinary antecedents and education, into the ordinary grooves of society. The heroine, a highly-cultured young lady, but without the ordinary accomplishments of reading and writing, may appear a very depraved young person to the members of a school board, but the adventurous, large-minded American must gain the sympathies of all. Perhaps, from a purely literary point of view, the most interesting of the novels of these collaborateurs are *Sweet Nelly My Heart's Delight* and *The Chaplain of the Fleet*. They bear the same relation to their other works that *Esmond and the Virginians* do to the Pendennis series of Thackeray. *The Chaplain of the Fleet* is entirely ruined in its third volume, Messrs. Besant and Rice often prolonging their stories until they end in bathos. Probably their publishers could assign a reason for this stretching of their writing beyond the limit of their ideas.

The present day "successes" of the circulating library are conspicuously wanting in the quality of humour. This is a fatal defect. No elegance of style, no skilful construction of plot, no carefulness of psychological study, can compensate for its absence. Humour is the very salt of a novel. Without it, subject to every moist wind of fashion and every corrupting change of taste, the book decays upon our shelves, unread by our children and unheeded even by the publisher in search of expired copyright. Of the novels of past generations only those now live in which this element of humour is predominant, and, if we think of it, this must necessarily be so, as few descriptions of social life can be truthful without it. The omission of humour in depictions of society is as great

a fault in a novelist as in a painter would be the want of atmosphere in his landscape, or of expression and action in his figures.

This want of humour in our fiction is the more remarkable that the fault does not lie with readers, but with authors—the demand exists, but the supply is not forthcoming. There is a public longing to recognize and do honour to any writer who shall create for it characters in whom it can believe and incidents that shall have at least the humour of ordinary life. I say *at least* because the novelist, like any other artist, has the opportunity of so presenting his subject that the sentiment he wishes to insist upon shall be more apparent in the counterfeit than in the reality ; and a reader may fairly expect to grasp the humour in fiction more easily than he would, unaided, be able to do in his study of the book of life. The faculty of distinguishing and representing the humour of social life is an artistic quality possessed, it may be, by the painter, the actor, or by that generally lugubrious individual the comic writer ; but when we meet with one who in addition to this faculty possesses the power of tracing this humour to its source, who can, by implication perhaps, suggest the causes of its existence, we have the true modern philosopher, the man for whom we are all waiting—the successful novelist of this and succeeding generations.





THE THEATRE'S UNREHEARSED TRAGEDY, "FIRE AND LIFE."

BY HENRY F. WARDEN.

FROM time to time the public is startled at the sudden announcement of an unrehearsed tragedy—"Fire and Life"—within the four walls of some modern theatre; the scene being laid in the auditorium whence, at a cry of "fire," the untried actors, incapable of order in their parts, rush, terror-stricken, for the few exits, and soon block them by heaped masses of frantic humanity.

Feelings of anguish and shame should be ours if such appalling scenes as those just enacted, added to many others revived in our memories, but a little farther back in the annals of the stage, do not bring up vigorous measures amongst members of governments, municipal and parliamentary, to whom the protection of helpless crowds in time of danger is distinctly due.

As to the expediency of arousing public attention to the danger incurred in a theatre, Captain Shaw, chief of the London Fire Brigade, in a pamphlet upon fires in theatres, published in 1876, says:—

It must be acknowledged that there are many people in the world who would rather not be made acquainted with the dangers that surround them, and whose natural nervousness is such that a warning against danger may sometimes

have as serious an effect on them as the danger itself; and if there is one class of men which more than any other has a constant opportunity of observing this kind of feeling it probably is a fireman. If, therefore, no good were likely to result from giving a warning about theatres, it might be as well at least for me to refrain from doing so; but, on the other hand, it is to be said that if a fireman is silent, and no one else knows how to speak, or no one considers it his business to speak, or perhaps no one cares or dares to speak, a sense of insecurity which may be often latent, but is never altogether absent, may go on continually increasing until at any moment it may take the shape of panic and cause disastrous consequences. The feeling of nervousness caused by a knowledge of risk is one wholly senseless and worthless; it can never by any possibility do good, and may do harm; but it exists and has to be acknowledged, and allowance must be made for it. I have never lost an opportunity of stating for many years, in connection with my business as a fireman, my sincere conviction that it is cowardice and folly to shut our eyes to that which is uncertain or unsafe in such a matter as that now under consideration; and true courage and prudence consist in acknowledging the existence of a great and serious danger, and taking just and reasonable measures to guard against it.

In regard to legislation in the matter, Captain Shaw says:—

When a serious disaster happens it will be considered reasonable and moderate, and judging from analogous cases it may be assumed that, after a great catastrophe, restrictions and regulations of a much more rigorous kind than any here recommended would be imposed without the slightest hesitation.

And he adds:—

I have carefully and laboriously studied the subject of protecting theatres from sudden destruction by fire. I think I know every source of danger that exists or can exist in such places, and I am strongly convinced that with *proper construction, judicious management, and sound precautions*, there would be no danger for the audience, and very little for the building.

Then follows a paragraph showing how rarely good management and precautions against fire are found to exist. He proceeds:—

I have never met with a manager in this or any other country in which it has been my fate to travel who did not impress me with a sense of his anxiety to do everything in his power for the safety of his audience, and I know of many efforts in this direction and much expense incurred in making them; but I can recall to mind very few instances in which the arrangements have been really methodical or satisfactory, and our own country presents a *humiliating example of the entire absence of any system or method whatever*.

The theatre would appear to occupy amongst the insurance profession the notable position of being the most

ancient hazardous risk in the world, and to have varied as such very little in degree since the "Circus Maximus" and "Theatre Pompeius" were each destroyed by fire three times in the early years of the Christian era. And modern Britain, after a lapse of eighteen centuries, has on record that "Her Majesty's," "Drury Lane," and "Covent Garden," like their ancient prototypes of Rome, have risen three times from the ashes of a conflagration.

The theatre is an ancient, ever popular and increasing place of pleasure. Wherever the European tongue is spoken it exists, and to-day varies in structure and arrangements very slightly, we may assume, when the same plays, operas, and burlesques, with their special effects, are produced in their entirety, sometimes by the same company of actors, at short intervals in widely-distant houses. The scenery and effects produced for a Shakspearean revival here may be transported across the Atlantic and fall into their places upon an American stage. Rapid transport has simlified these risks as well as the dramatic tastes of distant peoples; we know that a popular play, produced in Paris, will soon appear in London (a little disguised perhaps), and run rapidly through the provinces until familiar to all. If we then consider how numerous and wide-spread, how fully recorded the past fires, and, frequently, their origin—through some hundreds of years—we may, without dispute, *demand that the care taken in the construction and arrangements, and the precautions against fire employed in the best-managed houses, shall be made compulsory in all.* for according to the best authority, every theatre is doomed. It is only a question of time, within the space of a few years, when a fire shall destroy it.

Herr Fölsch, a German statistician, in his work upon theatre fires, published in 1878, by Meissner, Hamburg, gives some valuable information and figures, along with a dismal

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roll call of more than five hundred theatres destroyed or much damaged by fire; and we have extracted a few, comprised within a limit of about one hundred years from the present time—a period in which fully five hundred houses, valued at £25,000,000, have been destroyed and some thousands of lives lost in the flames, or through the panics which have ensued upon the outbreak of the fires.

The "Globe," a notable house and the earliest substantial English theatre, was destroyed by a fire that broke out, during the performance, on the 19th June, 1613, about nineteen years after the opening, and a few years before the death of our great Dramatist. In the wake of the "Globe," after an interval of more than one hundred and fifty years, we find the following, viz. :—

In 1778, the Coliseum at Saragossa was destroyed; the fire began about six in the evening, during the performance. Seventy-seven persons were killed and fifty-two injured.

1781. The second fire of the Paris Opera House, then in the Palais Royal—a building that would contain two thousand five hundred spectators. In the fire, which commenced after the performance, several of the actors lost their lives.

1789. On 17th June, the opera house in London, since called Her Majesty's Theatre, was destroyed for the second time since 1705. The fire broke out during rehearsal, but no lives were sacrificed.

On Friday, 19th June, 1789, the old Theatre Royal, in Marsden Street, Manchester, was burnt during the night. The account of this fire in the local paper of that time (*Harrop's Mercury*) is very meagre; but no lives appear to have been lost.

From 1794 to 1838 the average appears to have been scarcely three theatres per year destroyed, although during the latter year no less than eleven were laid in ashes. The following are the principal serious fires, viz. :—

1794. Theatre at Capo d'Istria was destroyed, and many hundreds of lives were lost. The origin unknown.

1796. Grand Theatre at Nantes burnt by a fire that began during the performance. None of the public, but seven stage employés, killed.

1807. Bowen's Columbian Museum (or Theatre), Boston, U.S., was burnt from an explosion of some preparation, and by the falling of a wall six persons were killed and several injured.

1808. During the performance of *Pizarro*, Covent Garden Theatre (opened in 1732) was burnt the second time. Twenty persons were killed.

1811. In this year the playhouse at Richmond (Virginia) was destroyed through an accident with the chandelier. Seventy-two persons, including the governor of the State, were killed and many others injured.

1818. On the 20th March, the Odeon Theatre at Paris was burnt for the second time, having been open ten years. The fire commenced in the daytime after rehearsal. Twelve firemen were injured.

1836. Lehmann's Theatre and Circus, St. Petersburg. The building was of timber. The fire commenced over the stage, about four in the afternoon, during a performance. A panic ensued, and nearly eight hundred persons were burnt or crushed to death, and many others injured.

1838. The Théâtre des Italiens, Paris, was burnt. The fire broke out after midnight in consequence of a smouldering firework, it is supposed, and four persons, including the impressario, were killed and eight others injured.

In the year 1844, on 7th May, the Theatre Royal, in Fountain Street, Manchester, occupying the ground upon which Daniel Lee & Co. and J. Munn's warehouses now stand, was burnt. It had been opened in 1807 under the lesseeship of Mr. Macready, the father of the tragedian. On

the night previous to the fire *A Winter's Tale* and an adaptation of Dickens's *Christmas Carol* had been performed by the stock company, under Mr. Robert Roxby's management. In the latter piece a firework squib had been used traversing a wire across the stage, and it is supposed that a spark from this trifle had smouldered amongst the upper shifts of the scenery until six in the morning, when the fire broke out. No lives were lost by this fire.

In May of 1845, the Chinese Theatre at Canton, a light frame structure, was burnt during a performance, and no less than one thousand six hundred and seventy lives were lost besides many persons being injured.

1846. Theatre Royal, Quebec, fired during the performance by the upsetting of a lamp. A panic was the result, and two hundred persons were killed and many wounded.

1847. February. The theatre at Carlsruhe, opened in 1808, took fire during the lighting of gas in the gallery after the admission of the public ; sixty-three persons were killed and two hundred and three injured.

1853. On 26th March, the Petrowsky Theatre and Opera House, Moscow, opened in 1825, was burnt in the daytime. By this fire eleven were killed and several wounded.

1857. In June, the Aqueduct Theatre, in Leghorn, was set on fire during the performance by a rocket amongst the scenery. One hundred were reported to have been killed and two hundred hurt.

1863. The Politrarna Theatre at Florence burnt from carelessness in lighting the gas over the stage ; several lost their lives in the flames.

1865, thirteen ; 1866, ten ; and in 1867, twelve theatres were destroyed. In eight of these fires several were killed and wounded. The number in one instance, that of Fox's Theatre, Philadelphia, burnt during the performance by a fire originating outside, being thirteen persons killed and sixteen injured.

In 1868, eleven; in 1869, twenty-two; and in 1870, twelve theatres were burnt. In four instances the fires were attended by loss of lives and injuries to several persons.

1871. There were twenty theatres destroyed, but this year was somewhat exceptional as including seven theatres destroyed by one fire in Chicago.

1872. Thirteen theatres were burnt, including the Chinese theatre, at Tientsin, in which the fire broke out during the performance, causing the death of six hundred persons.

1873. Fifteen theatres were destroyed, including the Alexandra Palace and Theatre, on June 10th, the fire having commenced upon the roof from a careless plumber's fire-pot, which had been left or overturned; and the Paris Opera House, in Rue le Pelletier—the fourth time the theatre called by this name had suffered from fire. The estimate of the loss at the latter was:—Building, £40,000; fittings and furniture, £12,000; scenery and costumes, £40,000; total, £92,000.

1874, fifteen; 1875, fourteen; and in 1876, seventeen theatres were burnt.

From this group the following fatal results attended the fires:—

The Olympic Theatre at Philadelphia, in January, 1874, two firemen killed and six wounded.

The State Theatre at Kasan, burnt in December, 1874, its second time of burning since 1859, by which two men were killed.

The Lyons Grand Theatre, burnt in November, 1875, by a fire which broke out just before the time for admitting the public. One fireman was killed.

The State Theatre at Barmen, in November, 1875 (it had only been opened the previous year). The fire occurred through some defect in the heating flue. Several were killed and others injured.

The Theatre des Arts, Rouen, in April, 1876. This house had attained its hundredth year of existence, having been opened in 1776. The fire was discovered about seven o'clock, before the public were admitted ; some of the stage *personnel* were in the dressing-rooms at the time, and the result was that eight lost their lives and twelve were injured.

On the 5th December, 1876, occurred the catastrophe at Conway's Theatre, Brooklyn. It had been opened in 1871, and was a well-arranged house, capable of being cleared of its audience within a very few minutes under ordinary circumstances. The auditorium was available for about one thousand four hundred and fifty spectators. On this ill-fated night there were about one thousand present. The performance was *The Two Orphans*, and it had proceeded to the last act, when, about eleven o'clock, a portion of the scenery at one of the wings came in contact with a gaslight, and the fire spread rapidly to the flies. Within five minutes of the outbreak of the fire the stage and a portion of the auditorium were in flames. A repetition of the usual madness which invariably seizes a crowd in a burning building took place. Many persons, more fortunate in being nearer to the exits, or strong enough to gain them, escaped, and many more were saved, though crushed and torn by their fellows in the struggle for life ; but when, a few days later, the smouldering ruins were searched, the charred remains of more than a fourth of that audience—two hundred and eighty three bodies—were discovered.

Herr Fölsch's list is brought down to October, 1877, and he thus summarizes the houses destroyed in periods of ten years since 1761, viz.:—

Between the years 1761 and 1770	...	...	8 theatres burnt.
" " 1771 " 1780	...	...	9 "
" " 1781 " 1790	...	...	11 "
" " 1791 " 1800	...	...	13 "
" " 1801 " 1810	...	...	17 "
" " 1811 " 1820	...	...	16 "
" " 1821 " 1830	...	...	30 "
" " 1831 " 1840	...	...	25 "
" " 1841 " 1850	...	...	43 "
" " 1851 " 1860	...	...	67 "
" " 1861 " 1870	...	...	97 "
" " 1871 " Oct., 1877	...	90	"

And this writer shows that in the four quarters of certain years in regard to three hundred and ninety-six theatres burnt—

Between January and March	...	...	136 fires occurred.
" April and June	...	...	100 "
" July and September	...	...	70 "
" October and December	...	...	90 "

Further, that of two hundred and eighty-nine fires—

56, or about 19 per cent,	occurred in the daytime.
15, " 5	" within one hour of opening.
36, " 12	" during the performance.
69, " 23	" within two hours of the closing.
113, " 39	" during the night.

In the list showing the proportion of the five hundred and sixteen fires falling upon different countries—

Those in the United States	...	...	...	are	176
" in Great Britain	...	...	...	"	68
" " France	...	...	...	"	63
" " Germany	...	...	...	"	49
" " Italy	...	...	...	"	45
" " Austria and Hungary	...	...	...	"	26
" " Russia	...	...	...	"	24
" " Spain and Portugal...	"	17
" " Various, in other European lands...	"	30
" " Various, not in European lands	"	18
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And the following is a list of some cities in which theatre fires have occurred :—

Berlin ...	... from 1817—1875	... ..	7 theatres burnt.
Bordeaux ...	„ 1716—1855	... ..	7 „
Boston ...	„ 1798—1873	... ..	11 „
Chicago ...	„ 1851—1877	... ..	12 „
Cincinnati ...	„ 1830—1876	... ..	9 „
Edinburgh ...	„ 1853—1879	... ..	6 „
Glasgow ...	„ 1780—1870	... ..	11 „ ^a
London ...	„ 1613—1873	... ..	31 „
Madrid... ..	„ 1802—1876	... ..	4 „
Manchester ...	„ 1789—1844	... ..	2 „
New York ...	„ 1820—1873	... ..	26 „
Paris	„ 1762—1871	... ..	29 „
Philadelphia..	„ 1799—1874	... ..	17 „
St. Petersburg	„ 1749—1859	... ..	6 „
San Francisco	„ 1850—1872	... ..	21 „
Venice	„ 1569—1836	... ..	6 „
Vienna... ..	„ 1761—1868	... ..	5 „
Washington...	„ 1820—1871	... ..	7 „

Manchester, amongst these eighteen cities, standing lowest, and London, Paris, and New York the three highest in the scale of these losses.

In his list of two hundred and fifty-two theatres destroyed by fire, and their average term of existence, Herr Fölsch finds :—

5 theatres were burnt before the opening.			
70	„	„	in the first 5 years after opening.
38	„	„	within 6—10 „ of „
45	„	„	„ 11—20 „ „ „
27	„	„	„ 21—30 „ „ „
12	„	„	„ 31—40 „ „ „
20	„	„	„ 41—50 „ „ „
17	„	„	„ 51—60 „ „ „
7	„	„	„ 61—80 „ „ „
8	„	„	„ 81—100 „ „ „
3	„	„	after 100 years of existence.

252 theatres, giving an average of about 22½ YEARS of existence to each one.

We may suppose that Herr Fölsch has taken this particular number (two hundred and fifty-two cases) as forming a fair average, possibly because his information is more complete and reliable in regard to them.

Since the autumn of 1877 the mortality has been high, both in regard to the number of houses destroyed and lives sacrificed through the fires and the panics which invariably follow, if the accidents happen when an audience is within. And the year 1880 will be marked far and near by the holocausts of Nice and Vienna. On 24th March, at the Italian Opera House, Nice, the curtain was about to be raised to the first act of *Lucia di Lammermoor*; the cheaper places were packed, and the intended occupants of stalls and boxes were just coming to the theatre after dinner, when an explosion of gas was heard at the back of the stage. In a moment the spectators were seized with panic, and soon frantic cries went up from the struggling mass, illumined by the fitful, lurid flames which had spread from the stage to the front of the house in less time than it takes to recount it. The exits were few in number, and many were killed in attempting to escape—the number of dead reaching between sixty and seventy.

On the 8th of December, that still greater calamity occurred at the Ring Theatre, Vienna. The house had only been built in 1873. On the previous evening, Offenbach's last opera had been produced with considerable success, and consequently the house was full in the non-reserved places when the fire commenced, as it evidently did, from an explosion of gas behind the curtain. There was a large tank above the auditorium, and other appliances; an iron curtain, and oil lamps in case of an emergency, and the gross negligence of the management in not having trustworthy aid to make use of these safeguards seems inexplicable. The gas-lights were even turned out, and the wretched creatures who came to hear the light strains of comic opera were left in darkness to play out this latest unrehearsed tragedy of the theatre. Between three and four hundred, according to the so-called official returns—but we shall pro-

bably never know the truth—fell; suffocated, torn, and heaped within arm's reach of open air and freedom, or were shrivelled beyond recognition in that unsuspected charnel-house!

Such risks are in our very midst, as any thoughtful observers may judge. We know that small fires are of frequent occurrence in theatres, but we hear of a very small proportion of these, for reasons we can readily understand. That they are often regarded as unimportant may, however, be gathered from evidence occasionally forthcoming. On the inquiry as to the fire at Covent Garden Theatre, in 1856, the fireman said "that fires in Covent Garden or any other theatre were of constant occurrence;" and respecting the burning of the Theatre Royal at Edinburgh, in 1865, it was elicited at the inquiry that "the top shifts of the scenery were so badly protected from the lights that on several previous occasions they had taken fire, but the men had been able to extinguish the flames." The same comes to light on evidence given regarding the burning of the Paris Opera House, it being stated "that few weeks passed without some outbreak of fire, particularly amongst the decorations; but these accidents were regarded as of little consequence." Dangerous performances, employing new and brilliant effects in lighting and decorating the scenes, are on the increase. 'The long run of pantomimes are especial features of additional hazard; and the further development of attractions of this kind appears to be one of the demands of the age. We may except modern "society-plays," not requiring extraordinary scenic effects; but such are few in comparison with those performances changing from one brilliant scene to another—the changes alone involving much additional risk. It is not possible to do more than recapitulate in a passing way the many sources of danger in a theatre. Open lights insufficiently guarded are the most frequent cause. The carrying

of movable lamps, the escape of gas, open fires, heating apparatus (used in theatres in colder climates), fireworks and representations of burning buildings, the firing of muskets, are all items which must be calculated ; and incendiarism is not an unknown danger. Such features must exist, and three classes of persons constantly realize the peril to human life and property inseparable from theatres—managers of theatres, insurance surveyors, and firemen ; and the Lord Chamberlain, after the Brooklyn and Vienna disasters, issued the usual suggestions as to sufficiency of exits and means to allay danger from panic ; but such mere suggestions are totally insufficient to avert the great risk that attends audiences at theatrical representations. We are now asking ourselves what shall be done. Must we stay away, or go and run the risk of having to play a part we have never rehearsed ? The public will see the play, and the managers ought to show us that escape is possible, even for an excited crowd, should alarm arise. But an audience should also be educated as to *entering*, as well as leaving, a theatre. Who amongst us has not witnessed shameful crushes, through which many have been needlessly jostled and hurt, at the pit and gallery doors of our theatres. Each person entering a theatre should be compelled by the police to take his turn fairly, according to the time of his arrival. A single file might extend, as it does in Paris on popular nights, for some hundreds of yards beyond the entrances. As everyone now-a-days can read, when the safeguards are deemed by the civic authorities to be complete and in working order, let everyone as the building is entered have instructions (in a few plain words upon a small bill) how to act and what would be done to help him in event of fire, what are the appliances at hand to suppress it, and the situation of the exits in the various parts of the house.

When all the best means have been adopted at our own houses, then it will devolve upon those whose function it is to enter and determine whether everything is in complete and smooth working order. We doubt the usefulness of iron, or wire mesh, curtain when it has to be worked from amongst burning scenery, but it could be also worked from the outside without danger; and we are reminded of the incombustible curtain referred to by the authors of *Rejected Addresses*. At the re-opening of Drury Lane Theatre, in 1794, an epilogue, by George Colman, spoken by Miss Farren, contained some couplets calculated to reassure the audience in case fire broke out behind the footlights. "The fair speaker declared solemnly—

No, we assure our generous benefactors,
'Twill only burn the scenery and the actors.

The curtain then descended, by way of experiment, leaving Miss Farren between the lamps and the curtain. A tank of water was exhibited, in which a wherry was rowed by a real live man, the band playing 'And did you not hear of a jolly young waterman?' Miss Farren reciting—

Sit still, there's nothing in it,
We'll undertake to drown you in a single minute.

'O vain thought!' as Othello says. Notwithstanding the boast in the epilogue—

Blow wind, come rack in ages yet unborn,
Our castle's strength shall laugh a siege to scorn,

the theatre, for the third time, fell a victim to the flames within fifteen years of the prognostic."

An instance, in which the usefulness of the fireproof curtain was proved, occurred in August, 1880, at the Munich Opera House, during the performance of Wagner's *Rheingold*. Towards the close of the performance the artificial lightning set fire to some gauze and the flames at once sprang up,

seized the flies, and ran rapidly through the scenery. Two of the chief actors addressed the audience, and, having explained what had happened, requested them to wait quietly. A fireproof drop, of steel plates, was let down, completely cutting off the stage from the auditorium. Then a powerful extinguishing apparatus was applied, and the fire was put out in a very few minutes. The orchestra continued to play during the extinguishing process, and the audience, feeling they were safe, remained quiet.

Very few of the theatres in this country, we fear, could show such a happy result were such an accident to happen during a performance; though I believe the theatres in Glasgow and Edinburgh have similar iron drops, that at Edinburgh being worked by hydraulic power.

In conclusion, we have reason to fear, from experience in the past, that no pressure from the legislature to reduce the risk to life attending every performance in an ill-managed theatre will be brought to bear unless the public adopt some means within *municipal* bounds for taking the responsibility to set its own houses in order, whether possessing a *royal patent* or not. Panic legislation is to be deprecated; but panic legislation of a short and sharp sort would in all probability be enforced if such a tragedy as that of Nice or Vienna were enacted in England.

The writer would—as one who in the course of twenty years' fire risk surveying has inspected many theatres and never found one thoroughly safe—appeal to each one possessing influence in any crowded community where theatres exist to urge certain specified rules when this question comes to be earnestly considered:—In the building and separation of the stage from the front of the house by a solid brick wall carried through and above the roof, and

reducing the openings in such wall to the smallest number, say the proscenium or stage opening and one other small opening on either side at the ground floor only protected by stout sliding iron doors. The stage opening to be closed by a wire or iron lattice drop curtain, simple and effective in construction—the raising and lowering of such a curtain to be a *nightly practice* whenever the house is open, as much to secure its smooth working as to accustom the audience to its appearance and purpose—to hold the fire in check until people can escape, and a means adopted for working this curtain from the *outside* as well as the inside of the house. In the protection of the lights, and the management of lighting both the stage, auditorium, dressing-rooms, work-rooms, and ante-rooms; in the manner of lighting the gas, and having two distinct and separate gas supplies (besides oil lamps, in case the gas failed, to show the audience the means of exit). In the application to scenery timbers, ropes, and appliances of every kind on the stage of a *preparation to give a resistance to flame*, such preparation having been proved effective, and to be renewable, if liable to lose its efficacy in lapse of time. In the sufficiency of exits for a theatre for times of panic, and proper construction of the doors to slide or open outward, and their freedom from fastening whenever an audience is present. In the adoption of simple measures for the quieting of the public in case of fire alarm. In the extinguishing apparatus and its disposal and effective condition, the readiness at all times of an ample water supply; and in the appointment of effective trained firemen in relays, so that a theatre be never wholly unattended, though the men might be less numerous when there is no performance in progress; and lastly in the power of the civic authorities to enter and examine at any time the measures and apparatus adopted for safety, and,

if such be found faulty, to condemn and close the house until all be made satisfactory ; and to forbid dangerous performances.

It does not appear too much to require attention *to all these points* in dealing with such an important subject as the making of theatres fit for the congregation of a crowd of helpless people.





DURING MUSIC.

BY C. E. TYRER.

W AFT me, O music! far away
From these grey fields and clouded skies,
To that bright East, still rich to-day
With the old charm that never dies;
Where marble fanes and desert flowers
Glow with a deeper light than ours.

Or bid me see, my pain to ease,
Upon some burning eve of June,
Behind the villa cypresses,
Rise bright and large the southern moon;
While in the laurel swells and fails
The love-chaunt of the nightingales.

Or by wide waters of the West
Let all life's noisy discords cease,
With one true heart on which to rest,
Two eyes, like stars, to teach me peace:
Rocked on those shores to sweet repose
By gentler gales than ocean knows.





MILTON'S "COMUS"
AND
FLETCHER'S "FAITHFUL SHEPHERDESS"
COMPARED.

BY WILLIAM E. A. AXON, M.R.S.L.

TWENTY-FOUR years before the performance of Milton's *Comus* to the admiring audience at Ludlow Castle, John Fletcher's pastoral comedy of the *Faithful Shepherdess* had been condemned by an impatient audience upon its first presentation on the stage. At the Christmas before *Comus* appeared, the *Faithful Shepherdess* was taken into royal favour and acted at Denmark House (since better known as Somerset House), before the king and queen. Henrietta Maria showed her interest in the performance by lending the players the costumes that had been used by herself and her ladies in those private theatricals which so greatly incensed the prejudices of the Puritans. The famous Inigo Jones devised the scenery for the pastoral, which was now apparently received with applause. With this sanction of royal commendation, it came again before the general public, and, according to the title-page of the third edition, it was performed "divers times with great applause at the private House in Black Friars." It must be at once admitted that the unfavour-

able verdict of the first audience was nearer the truth than the loyal acquiescence of those who afterwards admired it because it had secured the patronage of royalty. Notwithstanding many passages of great poetical beauty, it cannot be regarded as a successful work of art. The plot is obscure and confused, the characters are slight, and in some cases affected. The general atmosphere of pastoral innocence and arcadian simplicity is marred by the introduction of Cloe, the wanton shepherdess, who is vicious without motive, and sensual without any extenuation from either passion or temptation. These blemishes, fatal as they are from a dramatic point of view, need not prevent us from seeing that, although not a work of the highest order of merit, the *Faithful Shepherdess* contains many fine and suggestive passages. The best proof of this is the frequency with which Milton has caught inspiration from it. Many passages in *Comus* have evidently their origin in Fletcher's pastoral, and not the least interesting part of a comparison between the two poems is to see how the supreme power of the greater singer has adorned that which he has assimilated, changing as by the touch of a magician's wand, the inferior work of his predecessor into a thing of light and beauty. There is no such thing as absolute originality in literature, and it is sometimes very difficult to draw the line between unconscious assimilation and conscious plagiarism. Fletcher's work bears evident traces of the influence of Spenser, and in a still more marked degree of Tasso and of Guarini. The *Pastor Fido* of the latter evidently suggested the title of the English drama. The repulsive character of Cloe appears to be based upon that of Corisca in the Italian play. Even if Fletcher had been ignorant of Italian, an English version ("somewhat altered") of *Aminta* had appeared in 1591, written by Abraham Fraunce, and of the *Pastor Fido* by Dymock, in 1602.

The characters in the *Faithful Shepherdess* are little more than abstractions, and have very little of reality or human passion. They have an affectation of simplicity and innocence which removes them from the sphere of actual life. The play has, therefore, no value as a picture of rural manners;* and the audience, who first condemned, were right in refusing to accept these classical images as pictures of men and women having like passions with ourselves. The chief character in the *Faithful Shepherdess* is Clorin, who, having "buried her love in an arbour," renounces henceforth pleasures, and life, and love, resolving to be constant to the memory of the dead swain.

And here will I, in honour of thy love,
Dwell by thy grave, forgetting all those joys
That former time made precious to my eyes,
Only remembering what my youth did gain.
In the dark hidden virtuous use of herbs,
That will I practise, and as freely give
All my endeavours as I gained them free.
Of all green wounds I know the remedies
In men or cattle, be they stung with snakes,
Or charm'd with powerful words of wicked art;
Or be they love sick, or through too much heat
Grown wild or lunatic, their eyes or ears
Thicken'd with misty film of dulling rheum;
These can I cure, such secret virtue lies
In herbs applied by a virgin's hand.

* There is one English superstition recorded by Fletcher which has no classical counterpart. It is the ordeal of chastity by flame.

Clorin. Hold her finger to the flame;
That will yield her praise or shame.

Satyr. To her doom she dare not stand,
[Applies Clorin's finger to the taper.
But plucks away her tender hand;
And the taper darting sends
His hot beams at her fingers' ends.—
Oh, thou art foul within, and hast
A mind, if nothing else, unchaste!

There is one allusion to this belief in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Clorin, in addition to her dead lover, has a living wooer, a fantastic shepherd, Thenot, who loves her, not for her beauty or her virtues, but only for her constancy. Hence, if she listened, and consented to his suit, the very charm that bound him to her would be broken. Well may Clorin ask—

Did ever man but he
Love any woman for her constancy
To her dead lover, which she needs must end
Before she can allow him for her friend ;
And he himself must needs the cause destroy
For which he loves, before he can enjoy ?

Clorin, desirous of restoring him to a more rational frame of mind, and at the same time of relieving herself from his importunities, professes to be ready to listen to his suit. Thenot is at once disgusted by her supposed acceptance of his love, and, after upbraiding her with fickleness, forsakes her.

Clorin. 'Tis done : great Pan I give thee thanks for it,
What art could not have heal'd is cur'd by wit.

The chief dramatic interest of the play, however, centres in the course of true love between Perigot and Amoret, the Faithful Shepherdess, which is disturbed by the evil contrivances of rivals of both sexes. Perigot is beloved both by Amoret and Amarillis ; and the latter, finding her proffered affection rejected, determines upon a plan to prevent the happiness of her rival. For this purpose she promises her love to the Sullen Shepherd, upon condition that he will perform a certain charm, which will transform her into the shape of Amoret. She is first cast into a sleep by a garland of "sad herbs" bound upon her brows, and then let down into the holy well. She is drawn up in the counterfeit presentment of Amoret, and in this guise goes to keep an appointment with Perigot, whilst the Sullen Shepherd puts the real Amoret upon a false track. Perigot is madened by the loose and unchaste language of his supposed sweetheart. He offers to kill himself with his spear.

Amarillis. Oh, hold thy hands, thy Amoret doth cry !

Perigot. Thou counsel'st well ; first Amoret shall die.

Amarillis. Oh, hold !

Perigot. This steel shall pierce thy lustful heart !

As the damsel flies to avoid his fury, the Sullen Shepherd comes forward, and, dissolving the spell, restores Amarillis to her true form. Immediately after, Perigot meets the real Amoret, and wounds her ; and she is then cast into the well by the Sullen Shepherd, from whence she is restored to life and earth by the God of the River, who offers, vainly, to make her his queen. As Perigot is again about to kill himself, Amarillis confesses the deception of which she has been guilty, and offers to prove to him her power to assume the form and habiliments of Amoret. The real Amoret now encounters Perigot, who is unable to believe in the reality of what has all the appearance of the maid whom he has slain.

Was ever man so loath to trust

His eyes as I ? or was there ever yet

Any so like as this to Amoret ?

For whose dear sake I promised if there be

A living soul within thee, thus to free

Thy body from it !

He wounds her with his spear, and leaves her upon the ground, where she would have died but for the timely succour of a gentle satyr, who bears her to the bower of Clorin, where she is restored to health by that maiden's skill in herbs. Hither comes also Perigot ; and all the entanglements are cleared up, and the piece ends with general rejoicing at the reunion of the lovers, the repentance of Amarillis, the punishment of the Sullen Shepherd, and the conversion to chaster thoughts and life of the wanton shepherdess.

Milton has not only taken hints for phrases and descriptions from Fletcher, but there is also a striking resemblance between the attendant spirit of the one and

the satyr of the other. Each is the rescuer of distressed innocence, and acts in obedience to a specific mission for that "task," or "charge." Thus, the satyr says :—

But to my charge. Here must I stay
To see what mortals lose their way,
And by a false fire, seeming bright,
Train them in, and leave them right.
Then must I watch if any be
Forcing of a chastity ;
If I find it, then in haste
Give my wreathed horn a blast,
And the fairies all will run,
Wildly dancing by the moon,
And will pinch him to the bone
Till his lustful thoughts be gone.

Compare this with the phrase in l. 18, "But to my task," and the description of his office by the attendant spirit at l. 78 :—

Therefore when any, favoured of high Jove,
Chances to pass through this adventurous glade,
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star
I shoot from heaven to give him safe convoy.

After performing these good offices, the attendant spirit and the satyr alike take their leave of the audience in speeches which have considerable resemblance in kind, however much they may differ in the degree of poetical merit. This is the farewell of Fletcher's gentle satyr :—

Satyr. Thou divinest, fairest, brightest,
Thou most powerful maid and whitest,
Thou most virtuous and most blessèd,
Eyes of stars, and golden tressèd
Like Apollo ; tell me, sweetest,
What new service now is meetest
For the Satyr ? Shall I stray
In the middle air and stay
The sailing rack, or nimbly take
Hold by the moon and gently make
Suit to the pale queen of night
For a beam to give thee light ?
Shall I dive into the sea,
And bring thee coral, making way
Through the rising waves that fall

In snowy fleeces? Dearest, shall
 I catch thee wanton fawns or flies
 Whose woven wings the summer dyes
 Of many colours? get thee fruit,
 Or steal from heaven old Orpheus' lute?
 All these I'll venture for and more,
 To do her service all these woods adore.

Clorin. No other service, Satyr, but thy watch
 About these thicks, lest harmless people catch
 Mischief or sad mischance.

Satyr. Holy virgin, I will dance
 Round about these woods as quick
 As the breaking light, and prick
 Down the lawns and down the vales
 Faster than the windmill sails.
 So I take my leave, and pray
 All the comforts of the day,
 Such as Phœbus' heat doth send
 On the earth, may still befriend
 Thee and this arbour!

Clorin. And to thee
 All thy master's love be free.

Comus throws dazzling spells into the air. (149-158.)

Thus I hurl
 My dazzling spells into the spongy air,
 Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion
 And give it false presentments.

The Sullen Shepherd breaks the charm which has given
 Amarillis the form of Amoret in the same manner
 (p. 71):—

Up and down, every where,
 I strew the herbs to purge the air;
 Let your odour drive hence
 All mists that dazzle sense.
 Herbs and springs, whose hidden might
 Alters shapes and mocks the sight,
 Thus I charge ye to undo
 All before I brought ye to!
 Let her fly, let her 'scape;
 Give again her own shape!

As an instance of slight and yet significant imitation we
 may cite l. 497 in *Comus*:—

How cam'st thou here, good swain?

This is evidently an echo of Clorin's inquiry of Thenot:—

Shepherd, how cam'st thou hither to this place?

Fletcher describes how the God of the River revives the wounded and dying Amoret:—

Yet she's warm, her pulses beat;
'Tis a sign of life and heat.
If thou be'st a virgin pure,
I can give a present cure:
Take a drop into thy wound,
From my watery locks, more round
Than orient pearl, and far more pure
Than unchaste flesh may endure.
She pants, and from her flesh
The warm blood gusheth out afresh.
She is an unpolluted maid;
I must have this bleeding staid.
From my banks I pluck this flower
With holy hand, whose virtuous power
Is at once to heal and draw. (Act iii. sc. i.)

If this be compared with the passage relating to the dissolution of the spell in *Comus* the resemblance is evident. Thus Sabrina says:—

Shepherd, 'tis my office best
To help ensnared chastity:
Brightest lady, look on me;
Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
Drops, that from my fountain pure
I have kept, of precious cure;
Thrice upon thy finger's tip,
Thrice upon thy rubied lip:
Next this marble venom'd seat,
Smeared with gums of glutinous heat,
I touch with chaste palms moist and cold:—
Now the spell hath lost his hold.

The description of his stream by the God of the River may be compared with the passage in which Sabrina pictures her tributary waves:—

I am this fountain's god: below,
My waters to a river grow,
And 'twixt two banks with osiers set,
That only prospers in the wet,

Through the meadows they do glide,
 Wheeling still on every side,
 Sometimes winding round about,
 To find the evenest channel out.

This, if it lacks the lyrical glow of Milton, still suggests to the mind the song of Sabrina fair :—

By the rushy-fringed bank,
 Where grows the willow, and the osier dank,
 My sliding chariot stays;
 Thick set with agate, and the azurn sheen
 Of turkois blue, and emerald green,
 That in the channel strays:
 Whilst from off the waters fleet
 Thus I set my printless feet
 O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
 That bends not as I tread;
 Gentle swain, at thy request
 I am here.

The speech of the River God, immediately afterwards, is also worth quoting :—

I must make my waters fly,
 Lest they leave their channels dry,
 And beasts that come unto the spring
 Miss their morning's watering,
 Which I would not ; for of late
 All the neighbour-people sate
 On my banks, and from the fold
 Two white lambs of three weeks old
 Offer'd to my deity ;
 For which this year they shall be free
 From raging floods, that as they pass
 Leave their gravel in the grass ;
 Nor shall their meeds be overflown
 When their grass is newly mown.

We seem to have in this passage the seed which, falling on fruitful soil, produced these lines in *Comus* :—

Virgin, daughter of Locrine,
 Sprung of old Anchises' line,
 May thy brimmed waves for this
 Their full tribute never miss
 From a thousand petty rills,
 That tumble down the snowy hills :

Summer drought, or singed air,
 Never scorch thy tresses fair ;
 Nor wet October's torrent flood
 Thy molten crystal fill with mud ;
 May thy billows roll ashore
 The beryl, and the golden ore ;
 May thy lofty head be crowned
 With many a tower and terrace round,
 And here and there thy banks upon
 With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.

Some suggestions for this passage may have been derived from the thankful words of Amoret to the River God :—

For thy kindness to me shewn,
 Never from thy banks be blown
 Any tree, with windy force,
 'Cross thy streams, to stop thy course ;
 May no beast that comes to drink,
 With his horns cast down thy brink ;
 May none that for thy fish do look,
 Cut down thy banks to dam the brook ;
 Barefoot may no neighbour wade
 In thy cool streams, wife nor maid,
 When the spawns on stones do lie
 To wash their hemp and spoil the fry !

Amarillis in her distress apostrophises the Priest of Pan to save her from the Sullen Shepherd :—

Thou blessèd man,
 Honour'd upon these plains, and lov'd of Pan,
 Hear me, and save from endless infamy
 My yet unblasted flower, Virginitie !
 By all the garlands that have crown'd that head,
 By the chaste office, and the marriage bed
 That still is bless'd by thee ; by all the rites
 Due to our god, and by those virgin-lights
 That burn before his altar ; let me not
 Fall from my former state, to gain the blot
 That never shall be purg'd !

This may be compared with the invocation to Sabrina—

To aid a virgin, such as was herself,
 In hard besetting need.

There is one sentence of the Sullen Shepherd that might

have suggested the entire speech wherein Comus decries Abstinence. The unrepentant shepherd asks—

Hath not our mother Nature for her store
And great encrease, said it is good and just,
And will'd that every living creature must
Beget his like. (Act v. sc. v.)

The comparison of these passages not only shows us the sources of some of Milton's thoughts and expressions, but also his immense superiority in point of style. In spite of some beautiful passages, the general effect of the *Faithful Shepherdess* is tiresome and even confusing. There is a lack of reality about the characters, who speak and act in the most inconsequent fashion. In the case of Milton, we are impressed, even in the most imaginative passages, by the solid basis of verity and reason. There is, in Fletcher, a capacity for poetical expression, and a luxuriance of imagination, which runs riot, and trenches upon the grotesque and the ridiculous. Milton, with the true instinct of genius, avoids this exaggeration. His fancy, though it peoples each shade and thicket, and decks each thought with the glories of ancient mythology and the music of poetry, is kept under reasonable control, and made to serve the poet's mission of celebrating the praises of virtue and temperance.





SOME ACCOUNT OF A
BYROM MS. RECENTLY ADDED TO THE
CHETHAM LIBRARY.

BY J. E. BAILEY, F.S.A.

A VALUABLE and interesting Byrom MS. has recently been purchased by Mr. Crossley (from Mr. Gray) for the Chetham Library. The MS. contains Byrom's journals, &c., for the years 1730-31, and the matter embodied in it is not included in the volumes of Byrom's *Literary Remains* published by the Chetham Society. The book contains near three hundred pages, written in the shorthand invented by himself. It depicts the Manchester of a century and a half ago. We get the gossip of the coffee houses, of which there were two—the Old Coffee House and the Merchants' Coffee House. The Bull's Head was another house of resort.

The chief subject of local discussion was the proposed establishment of a workhouse, which agitated the town not a little. An Act of Parliament was introduced for it by the Whig Ministry, but as there was an expectation that its management would fall into the hands of the Manchester Whigs, Byrom, Sir Oswald Mosley, Darcy Lever, and other friends successfully opposed it. An admirable lesson for civic life was embodied in Byrom's advice to his friends in this discussion, "to avoid personal reflection and to come to the point." Other public matters are introduced, centring

round the Lord of the Manor, Lady Bland, Dr. Deacon, Dr. Mainwaring, and Byrom's Cheshire friends, his shorthand brethren, and his "brothers in morality."

The home life of the diarist and his family is incidentally displayed. He can be followed to the study or the "great parlour" of his house, reading his books amongst his family, amusing his son Ned the while by Pestalozzian games and teaching his daughter Beppy his method of shorthand. Or he can be accompanied in his country walks along paths and amid scenes which Manchester knoweth no more; one walk in particular through Hulme fields and by Caleb's Bongs and Garratt to his brother Brearcliffe's. Caleb's Bongs was near Little Ireland, and on the site of Mr. Birley's mill.

Byrom's literary and religious life are most amply illustrated by this old book. A great part of it is of the nature of a common-place book, in which he entered passages from books read at the Chetham Library, consisting of such authors as Philo-Judæus, St. Columbanus, Nicholas de Cusa, Blossius, Lactantius, &c. To the library he betook himself on Acres Fair day in 1731; and there his friends frequently came and interrupted him, provoking him to say once of one of them, "The devil take him!" He was a careful reader, and criticized his authors on points that were engaging his attention. Antoinetta Bourignon, a religious enthusiast of the seventeenth century, whose writings occupy twenty-one volumes, was the supreme saint in Byrom's hagiology. Nicholas Malebranche was almost as highly esteemed, and his portrait, it is now seen, Byrom was very eager to get. A third venerated teacher was William Law, the tutor of Gibbon, who said, concerning Law's *Serious Call*, that if it found a spark of piety in the reader's mind it would kindle it to a flame. Byrom had not yet been introduced to Law, and he put aside an intention he had of writing to him by the remark that it was "so like

invocation of saints." Very different characters are introduced in the persons of Johnson, Duck, and Elwall. The first, known as Fiddler Johnson or Opera Johnson, is met with at the Manchester balls, and he endeavoured to interest Byrom (who had already popularized his *Hurlothrumbo* by an epigram) in his *Cheshire Comics* which Colley Cibber had promised to introduce at the new Opera House. The clergy of the Collegiate Church preached against Johnson and his patrons. Stephen Duck, who was satirized by Swift, was a notoriety of his day, being originally a thrasher in Wilts. He wrote some verses which the Earl of Macclesfield read to Queen Caroline, who gave him an annuity of thirty pounds and a house at Richmond. A copy of his poems came to Manchester in 1730, and Byrom addressed a letter to him in humorous vein, telling him how, in contrast to his homely subjects, some modern poets (like Addison) had taken Cæsar, Cato, and other old "rascalities of Rome," to make them heroes. He concluded—

Stephen, I vow it were a fitter thing
For such as them to *thrash* and such as thee to *sing*.

That singular individual Edward Elwall, called a Jewish Arian Sabbatarian, had been an Episcopalian, a Presbyterian, and a Baptist. He was tried for heresy and blasphemy in 1726. He held that everything in the Old Testament that was not typical was of perpetual observance. He wore a turban; he allowed his beard to grow; and had ribands in the plaits of his coat. Byrom visited him at Wolverhampton and Chester, and discussed the Trinity and "all things" with him at an inn in the last-named place. The MS. also contains lists of Byrom's pupils and specimens of his correspondence in his grave and sportive moods, with some inedited verses. The high moral tone of Byrom's life had a great influence over his associates, the more intimate of whom were known as his "disciples."

From the numerous specimens of Byrom's letters two passages may be cited. The following is the postscript of a letter to Mr. John Stansfield, his "dear brother," who was abroad, dated September, 1731 :—

P.S. Wednesday morning, 9th 1731. This Letter has lain, M^r St, for a fair wind and now it sets sail, I should have said somewhat of D^r Scot, having perused him with that View, but it will require another Letter, and till you have undeceived me about M^{rs} B[ourignon] I can only say that he is a very good Author compared with most other Divines, but far short of writing like her, especially upon the Love of God. Some of his Sentiments are, I think, by no means just, but that may be my sin. I wish we had no worse authors than he : however the best we have at present is M^r Law.

(Inclosed in this) *Mons^r mon bon ami*, are you coming to our northern climes, or not? The report of your appearance here succeeded your letter to me so soon that it made me more careless of writing to you and thanking you for your care about Father Malebranche, whose head, if I remember, is like the picture ; but I am not judge of the mezzotinto ; the left eye looks somehowish. M^r Houghton wrote me word that M^r Kirkhall was gone to be married to a 2000^l portion in some country : is it true? is he come back? I thought to have been in London by this time, but I am not, I have longed to write to M^r Law but — it is so like invocation of saints that I know not how to venture ; but if I stay here and you there, I think I will too, for I shall rejoice to have his opinion if it belonged to me to ask it, &c. I was told not half an hour ago (by M^r Walker) that some persons in this town have wrote to a friend in London to know his sentiments of M^{rs} Bourignon, about which lady I have writ to M^r Stansfield in answer to one from him, and he enclosed it to you with desire to call upon him *en passant* with my service. . . . I grow so passionately in love with her that there may be need to check me a little, and I can bear it best from a friend that knows somewhat of her. I write in a hurry at present, but unless you come down very soon I promise to pay you a letter of what length you please to order your humble servant

B.

Our breth. Hghtn & L^l are alive at Paris ; I must write them anon. My Aunt, your G.mother, is hearty ; Aunt Clowes buried ! Our Friends well. Phebe and my Flock have just been 'to see some live creatures, viz. a Tyger L^{pr}d, Civt. cat, 'Posum, Monkey, &c. Phebe was struck with the likeness of one of the baboons to the human 4 fingers & thumb very plain, and observed that there must be something more in us than the body only to be so far above them.

On Sunday evening, 29 Aug, 1731, after reading Barcklay and taking notes from him, Byrom turned the Lord's Prayer into Latin verses, thus :—

OREMUS.

Celestis Genitor, nomen tibi sanctificetur,
Adveniat Regnum, fiat tua sacra [*or ter sancta*] voluntas,
In terra velut in Cælo ; in quotidianum
Da nobis Panem ; Peccataque nostra remitte
Sicut nos Fratrum Peccata remittimus, ac nos.
Nulla sinas unquam tentare pericla salutis,
Sed procul nobis tollas genus omne Malorum,
Namque tuum est Regnum tua namque immensa Potestas,
Gloriaque in Eternum, dicat Vox quælibet. Amen.



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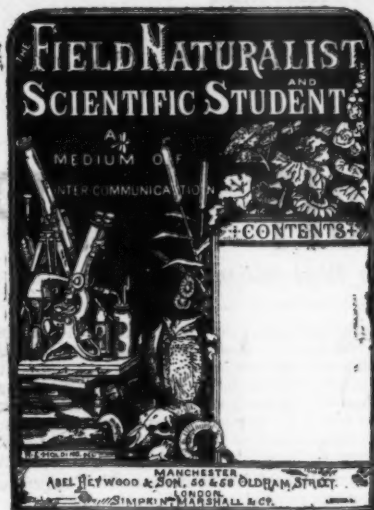
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